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MLA Amplified: Content Analysis and Tweeter Tales

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MLA Amplified: Content Analysis and Tweeter Tales



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Objectives: During the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Medical Library Association, in addition to the conference blog with official bloggers, there was an active Twitter stream using the hashtag #mla2010. Lorcan Dempsey has coined the term "amplified conference" to refer to conferences which employ social media and networking tools (Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, etc.) to communicate conference content. This poster presents an overview of the #mla2010 Tweets as a social and intellectual history of the meeting.

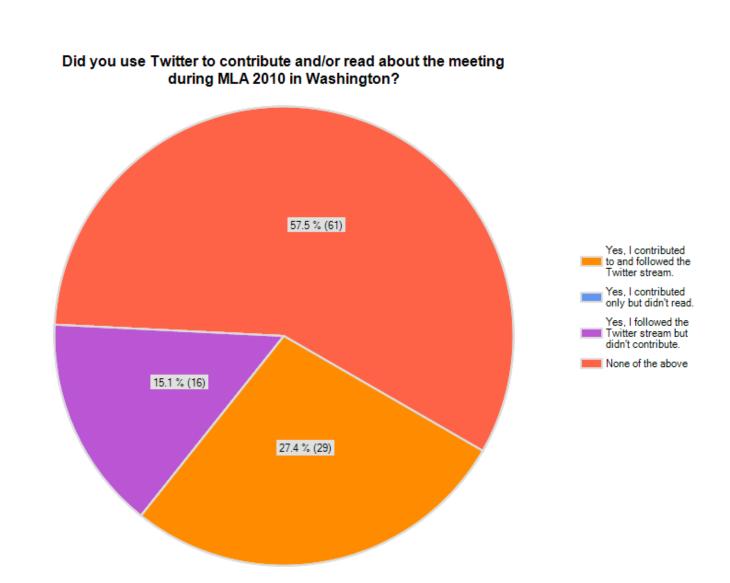
Methods: Content analysis and survey. Those posts which were marked with the official conference hashtag were collected using TwapperKeeper software. Posts were grouped into themes and categories in order to make conclusions about the effects an amplified MLA conference has on the conference attendee experience, and to inform recommendations for future utilization of social media at our annual meetings. A survey of active participants in the MLA 2010 Twitter stream will provide additional data about the experience and value of participation in an amplified MLA conference.

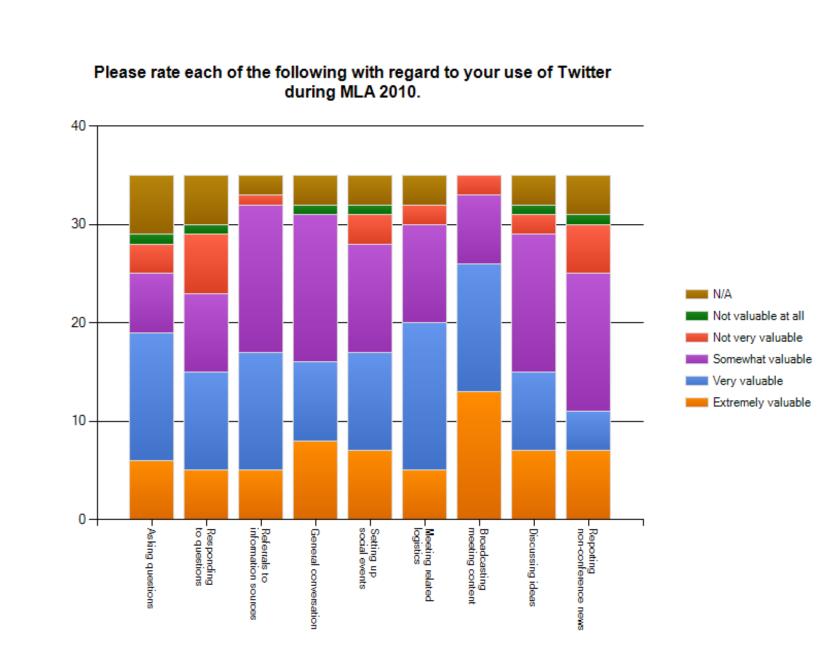
Are we supposed to tweet the drunken parties? #mla2010 -- @ChrisTheCat

Twapper

Is an online service which archives Tweets. You can create an archive based on keyword, #hashtag or @person.

Results: The survey received 188 responses, 56.4% (n=106) of whom had attended MLA 2010. A sizeable minority of MLA 2010 attendees made use of the Twitter stream, either as readers, Tweeters, or both. Using an adapted coding scheme to analyze the #mla2010 Tweets, we found that Twitter was used mostly to broadcast conference content, set up social events, discuss ideas, and for general conversation around the meeting. In addition, the Twitter stream allowed for people unable to attend a meeting in person to follow the events. The results from the analysis of the Tweets matched self-reported behaviors by those who used Twitter. Those who abstained cited many reasons including a dislike of Twitter, a preference for face to face interactions, and lack of online access during the meeting.







The survey asked "What is your most memorable experience of using Twitter during MLA 2010?":

Broadcasting session content:

- To see what people's comments were about certain events that I may have missed
- Posting during the NLM Update about the forthcoming author disambiguation tool and getting a lot of retweets on that.
- Seeing twitter comments on the screen at the Tech Forum
- Following the Tech Forum, because I had to moderate another (less popular!) session at the same time.
- After sessions I would check to see what I'd missed in the backchannel.
- There was too much to read every time I tried. Also, resembled an echo chamber at times.
- I attended the UpToDate presentation and (think) I was the only person in the room using Twitter. I got A LOT of feedback from colleagues not at the presentation.
- •It's always nice to see comments on your posters/presentations/etc--good feedback channel.

cial:

- It was fun to see & meet people in person at the beginning of the conference, some that I had met beforehand, and others I'd gotten to know via Twitter.
- Using it to connect with people who I have only met via Twitter
- We had a fun Tweet up at the Opening Reception.
- When Max asked if anyone had hairspray.
- Hearing about a meet up of alums from library school

Connectivity issues:

- •I didn't really use it very much as I could not get a signal to my phone in the bowels of the Washington Hilton.
- •I used only my phone, a Verizon Blackberry, and had great connectivity throughout the meeting.
- •Most memorable might be that it was hard to use due to the lack of wifi (!!!) and poor cellphone reception in meeting rooms.

Other:

- I used Twitter to read the MLA blog.
- I couldn't find my meeting room at one point and someone helped me through Twitter.
- My utter pit of despair wireless fail as Twitter jockey during Tech Trends? :)
- I had a some new followers by the end of the meeting!

@krafty "blogging is dead" !!!! #mlattt #mla2010

Conclusion: For those who choose to utilize it, Twitter provides a way to enrich the annual meeting experience. It also offers a more informal, real-time record of events that can complement official conference proceedings.