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The Importance of Politics in Twitter

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Q. How important are politics in Twitter compared to trending topics?

Twitter and the search engine Archivist were used to compare the tweets of trending topics vs. politics. First, the twitter topics were found then a comparison was made through Archivist, which counted the number of tweets per topic each day. We started our search August 25 and let it run through August 27 and found that our trending topics; Lindsey Lohan and Inception, were a lot more popular than our political topics, Obama and bin Laden. An interesting observation though, was that we had data from another search earlier in the summer on the same topics we had. Although it would have been nice to use data that was found earlier we needed to disregard it and use our own search.

A. In Twitter, politics often take a backseat to trending topics. It seems like more people spend their time discussing pop culture than politics on social networking sites. We found that Lohan and Inception were very popular subjects among the Twitter followers and bin Laden and Obama weren't nearly as popular.

Subjects of Tweets

Most of Obama's tweets were about his approval rating, the job he's done up to this point, and many were about his religion and if he is Muslim or not. Many had to do with more pop culture rather than his political decisions or actions he is taking.

Bin Laden had very few tweets but they were about his bodyguard warning of escalation in Yemen. Bin Laden has sort of disappeared so news about him and his warnings wouldn't be that frequent.

Lohan tweeted as soon as she was released from jail and that was a big deal to most Twitter followers. They loved that she would tweet right away and update them on what she doing. Other tweets were about her rehab and people wondering if she would go back.

The Inception tweets were mostly movie reviews and a few were about 10 things that went wrong with Inception. Others were people giving their take on the movie and whether or not they enjoyed it.

This data that we found really emphasizes the fact that these social networking sites mainly deal with pop culture and people updating their personal lives. Inception and Lohan were so much more popular than Obama and bin Laden and it's because people have a direct link to celebrities and what they are doing. Communication with popular figures such as Lindsey Lohan or Lady Gaga wasn't possible unless you were close to them and now it's as simple as updating your Twitter page or sending a message. As soon as Lohan was released from jail and she tweeted people loved it because they now know what celebrities are up to. It's not a popular site if you want news on politics, there are some topics that generate interest but they aren't big compared to celebrities. To answer the question, politics are not that important on social networking sites like Twitter because people are more interested in tweets from celebrities updating their personal lives.

Trending Topic	Lohan	Inception	Obama	Bin Laden	Total
Number of Tweets	10,449	5,031	771	2,266	18,571

Data:

[Obama](#)

[Bin Laden](#)

[Inception](#)

[Lohan](#)