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Global Attitude Towards Wikileaks

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Global Attitude Towards WikiLeaks

By Anthony Sudarmawan, David Clayton, and Jeremy McDaniel

Introduction

Wikileaks have recently been decorating the headlines of newspapers in many countries and their contents have surprised a lot of readers on government secrets. Many government officials, in contrast, were outraged because the availability of classified information destabilizes security and diplomacy. With many players involved, Wikileaks have been a famous subject in interaction inside Twitter. What kinds of messages are addressed in Twitter regarding Wikileaks? Does the content of the messages change over time to reflect the political implications of this event? The answers to those questions are laid on the analysis of the research of the messages in two days time frame.

Procedure

The data given by Professor Boynton was collected from the search engine 'desktop archivist' regarding Wikileaks. Since the data set was tremendous, the first and the last 1,500 messages were cut off from the data collection and the remaining data collection was sorted by languages. The data set in English was separated into the first 450 tweets and the last 450 and analyzed. The content of the messages was grouped into 4 categories: positive messages, negative messages, announcements, and jokes. Positive messages are the messages which praise or support the content while negative messages contradict any statement or mock a subject. Announcements are messages which restate news or events and jokes are messages which are addressed with humorous intention.

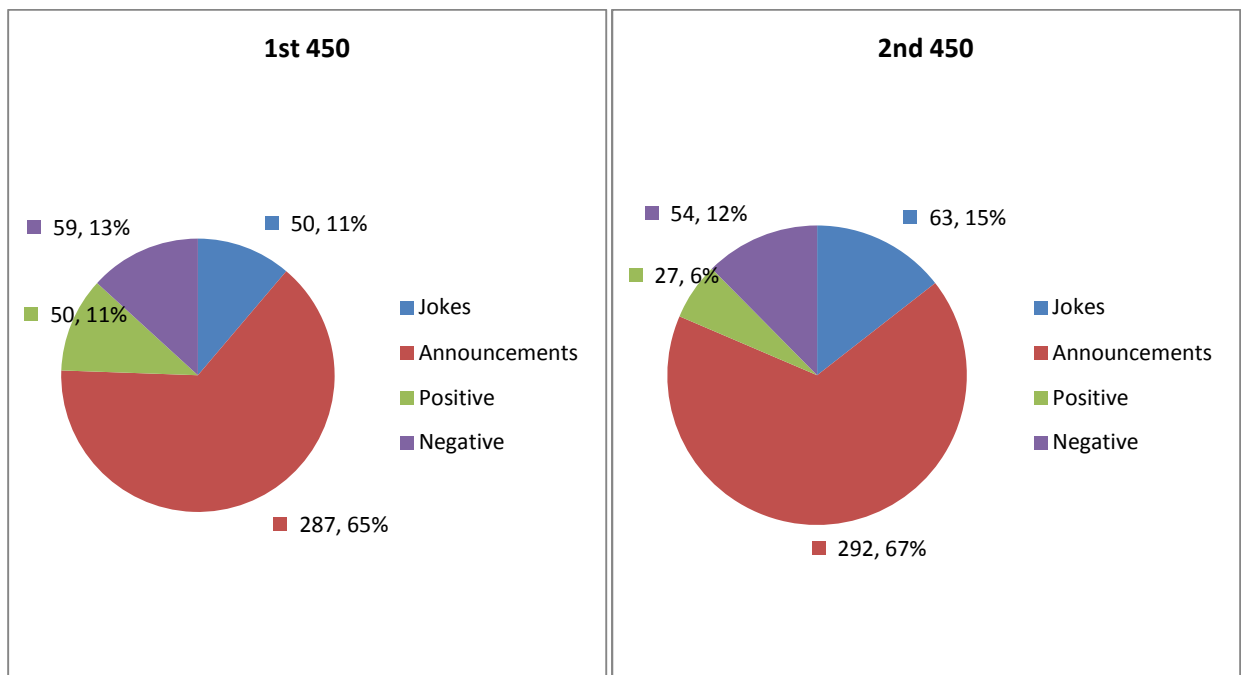
Analysis

Two main questions will be examined in this paper: What types of tweets (i.e. jokes, announcements, tweets in support of or in opposition to WikiLeaks) will be most prevalent in the collected data, and does time (i.e. beginning of data collection versus end of data collection) alter the overall composition of the tweets?

The first 450 tweets examined produced 50 statements in support of WikiLeaks (11.1%), with 59 (13.1%) in opposition. There were also 50 jokes (11.1%) which referred to the event, and, as in previous studies regarding global communication, a large number (287, or 63.78%) of announcements. In contrast, the set of tweets from the end of data collection contained a much lower frequency of supportive

statements. Of the 450 inspected microblogs, only 6% (27) contained any sort of positive sentiment regarding WikiLeaks, while the negative statements had quite similar results (12%) to the early data set. Humorous tweets increased slightly to 63 (14%), and, once again, the announcements dominated the research, accounting for 292 (64.89%) tweets.

As expected, the overwhelming majority of tweets examined were announcements. The difference between the early and late data sets in this regard was nearly nonexistent. Surprisingly, there was a fairly significant difference in tone between the data sets. In the first half, the positive and negative messages were fairly evenly distributed, while in the later set, negative tweets outnumber the positive 2:1. Attempts at humor were fairly steady, increasing slightly from the beginning of data collection to the end.



Conclusion

This report set out to discover the content of the vast stream of messages about Wikileaks and whether that content changed over time. Of the tweets we looked at the overwhelming majority were classified as announcements, both at the beginning and end of the data set. This shows that for this set of data, the most important use of twitter is as a means of spreading news and information rather than commenting on that news. As shown in the report, opinions were expressed in a variety of ways through positive comments, negative comments and jokes. While jokes stayed relatively constant throughout the research, the ratio of positive and negative messages changed. In the first 450 messages the ratio of negative and positive messages is almost 1:1, while in the last 450 negatives outweigh positives roughly

2:1. This shows us that over time discussion on this controversial issue turned decidedly negative despite the fact that there was significant support for the Wikileaks early in the data set.