

Brandwatch Report/

The Twitter Landscape /2013/ UK



A study of the conversation and behaviour found on Twitter

We go beyond the limitations of brand-based keywords to analyse a large sample of randomly selected tweets



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Why read this...

Twitter is no longer a platform exclusive to the pioneers and innovators of online business. Nearly every consumer brand and many B2B companies have realised the vast opportunities Twitter presents to grow and improve their organisations.

But, beyond the conversation directed at us and by those we follow, how much do we really know about the network and its several hundred million users? What do people talk most about? Do males and females behave differently? How are brands talked about more widely?

Here we take a fresh approach to answering these questions and provide a whole new range of insights to help you understand Twitter.

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The Twitter Landscape /2013

Introduction/

This study, conducted using data from a two-month period in late 2012, offers an overview of current trends in Twitter usage. The results, analysing brand mentions and consumer voice, are especially pertinent for businesses looking to understand and embrace Twitter as a communication channel.

Based on a corpus of 10,000 randomly selected tweets, our research provides insight into

1. Frequency of brand name mentions on Twitter.
2. Prominence of certain topics and themes, such as television, music, celebrity, sport, politics, literature and health.
3. How gender impacts conversation topics and branded conversation.
4. Twitter user segments most likely to mention particular types of brands.

View Brandwatch's extended research paper that informed this report.

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Background/

As brands continue to increase investments in Twitter as a communication channel, increasing opportunities arise to learn from the activity taking place on the platform, and how to better use it to your advantage as a business.

Limiting searches solely to brand names, products and channels ignores the vital importance of broader contextual knowledge. Much social media research starts out with this focal bias, thus failing to bring to light many of the rich insights social media can provide about consumer habit when a wider net is cast.

To this end, our report takes an inverse approach to that of studies before it, by beginning instead with a random sample of Twitter data (10,000 tweets). If this sample is then taken to fairly reflect the majority of Twitter usage, we can unveil, with unprecedented breadth, a fascinating view of the overall Twitter landscape.

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Key Findings/

Our research uncovered the following key findings:

- Twitter usage in the UK is approximately **62%** engagement, **38%** broadcast.
- TV/Film, Sport and Music are the most popular topics of Twitter conversation.
- **3.6%** of all tweets mention brands, more than the number discussing music or celebrities.
- Female authors are significantly more likely to tweet about “personal” matters.
- Twitter conversation displays similar gender-specific patterns to speech.
- Males complain more frequently, while females talk about purchase experiences and enter competitions more.
- Feedback on advertisements, particularly TV-based, is a regular theme for tweeters.

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Methodology/

A random sample of 1,000 UK Twitter accounts was selected for the study, using a random word generator. These were then split by gender.

Group	<i>n</i>	Number of Tweets		Other Users	
		Total	Per Day	Following	Followers
ALL ($\bar{x}$)	1,000	10,609	11.7	694.2	3,515.1
FEMALE ($\bar{x}$)	470	12,096	14.6	707.2	3,493.3
MALE ($\bar{x}$)	530	9,291	9.2	682.6	3,534.4

Each account was then allocated a starting date (between August and September 2012) and 10 consecutive tweets from each account were selected to create the corpus of 10,000 texts.

For a full methodology, please see the unabridged paper.

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Methodology/ cont...

All tweets were manually analysed by native English speakers and categorised in two parallel ways.



Post type:

This category identifies whether the tweet was solo, a reply, a tag (an @ mention of another user but not a reply) or a retweet.

Topic:

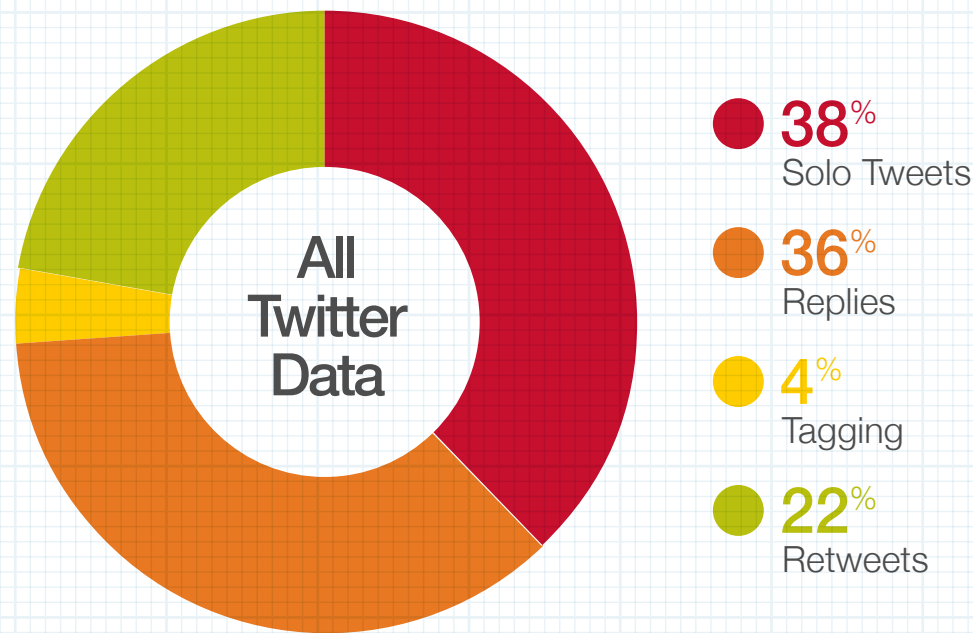
This category identifies the topic or subject of each tweet. These included: television, sport, music, celebrity, news, work, education, politics, gaming, health, religion, literature, venues, and any combination thereof.

When a tweet did not fit a predefined topic, it was assigned the topic category of "personal".

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Results/ Tweet Types

Twitter is approximately 62% engagement, 38% broadcast.



Whilst replies and solo tweets are almost equal in number, retweets and other tags combined with replies show that the engagement aspect of Twitter dominates that of broadcast.

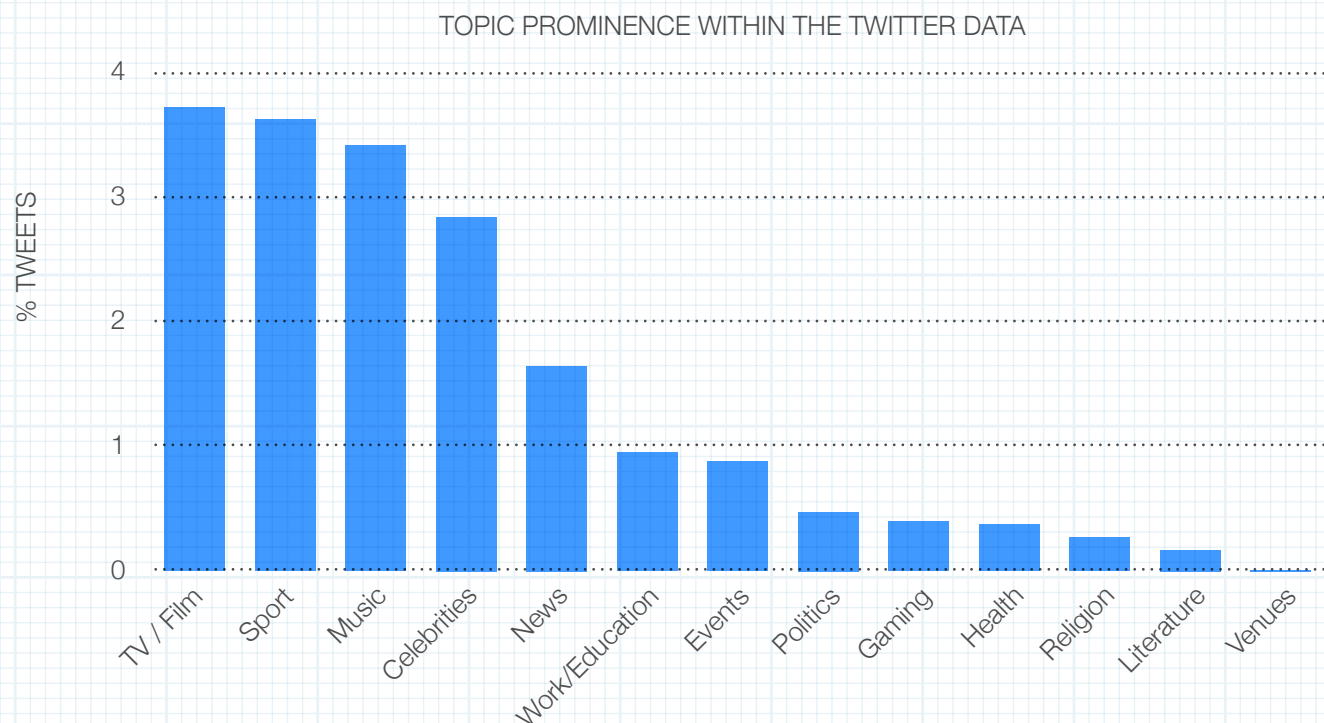
Our findings also showed female authors were 25% more likely to retweet than males but that replies were 18% more often authored by males.

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Results/ Conversation Topics

TV/Film, Sport and Music were found to be the three most popular topics of conversation.

Four in every five tweets were classed as “personal”, as they were not classified as matching one of the above topics. Many of these included mentions of birthdays, proverbs, horoscopes and dieting



Twitter/

TELEVISION

This couple on super nanny USA let their kid play with a machete!!!'



Twitter/

MUSIC

Now I'm purchasing Gangnam style, it will be my ultimate work out song'

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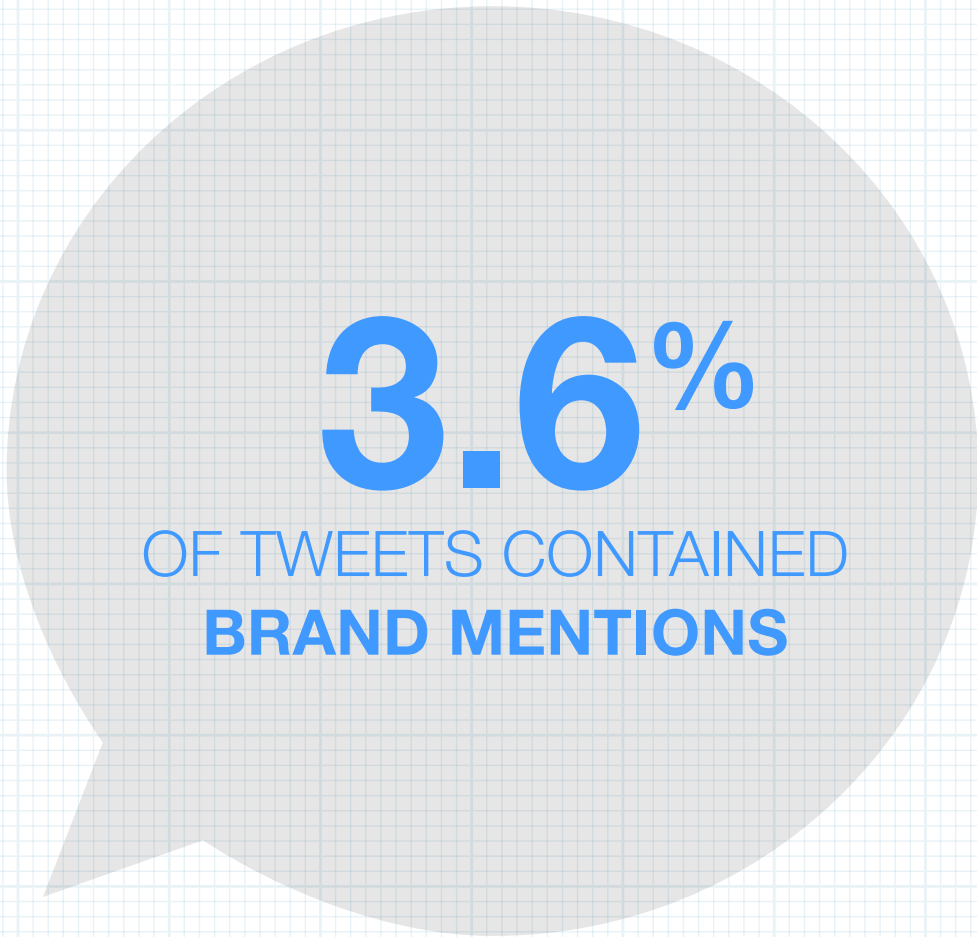
Results/ Conversation Topics / cont...

Brands are mentioned more than music or celebrities.

If 'brands' was taken as a separate topic, it would be almost as prominent as TV/film and sport, ranking above music, celebrities and all other topics predefined in our study.

If we take our 10k sample as reflective of Twitter in its totality, we can extrapolate that a staggering **12,600 tweets per minute mention brands*** – no clearer indication is needed of social media's huge impact on business today.

* In October 2012, Twitter reported a total of 500m tweets per day



3.6%
OF TWEETS CONTAINED
BRAND MENTIONS

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Results/ Top Topic (1)

Notably, tweets demonstrated an immediate nature, by the prominence of the gerund form “watching”. This is evidence of the popularity of “live-tweeting”, where television viewers provide comment on particular shows during their broadcast.

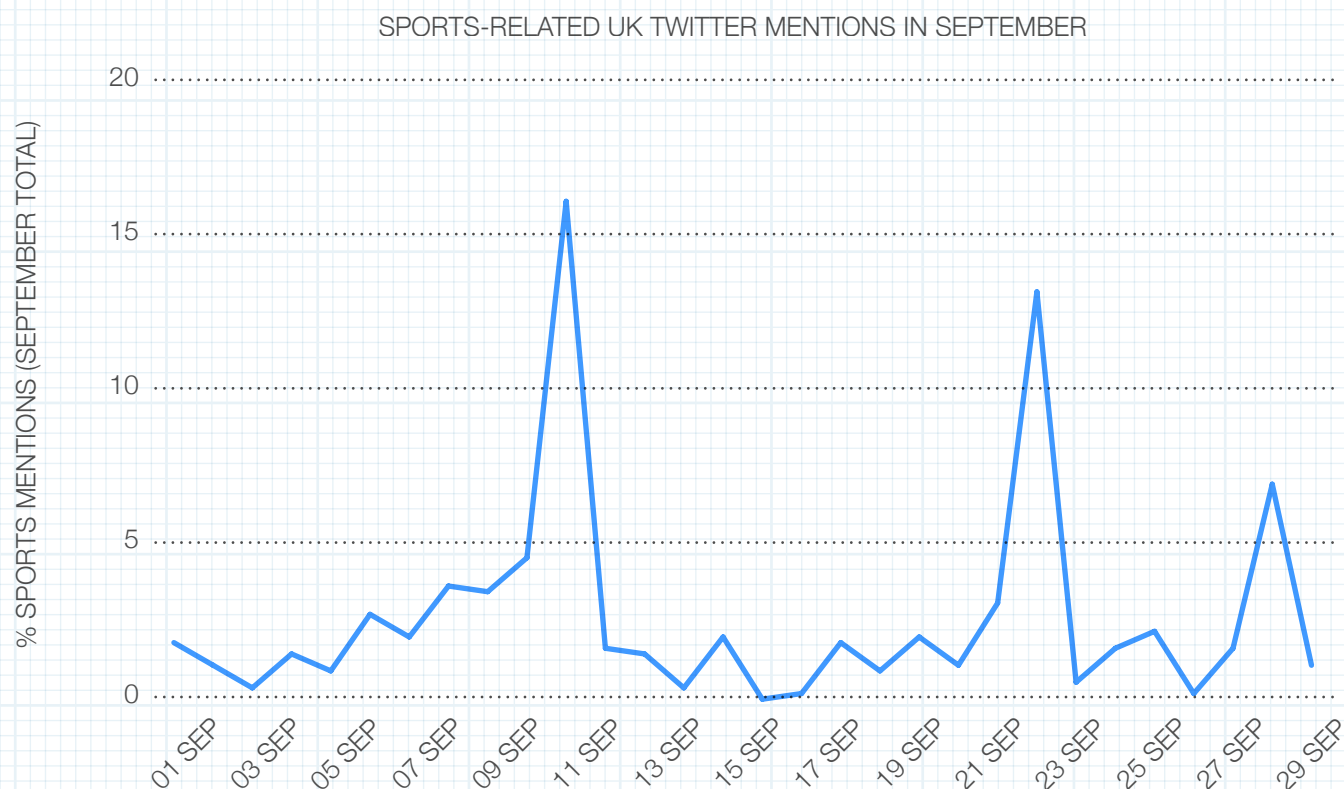
A separate Brandwatch study on “dual screening” found that shows promoting a hashtag get tweeted 63% more than those that don’t. Brands too are piggybacking on the phenomenon, by running opportunist Twitter campaigns and competitions relating to the TV shows.



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Results/ Top Topic (2)

Sport conversation is male dominated and led by specific events.



Similar to tweets about TV, sport tweets clearly demonstrated a sense of 'live' reaction to events. Big sporting occasions attracted spikes in conversation and buzz was often related to viewing experiences, though less explicitly than with television.

What does this mean for brands?

As well as indicating where and when to run promotional campaigns, there is also a clear, broader brand opportunity for organisations to capitalise on sporting events by taking part in supporting and commenting on them just like their target audience.

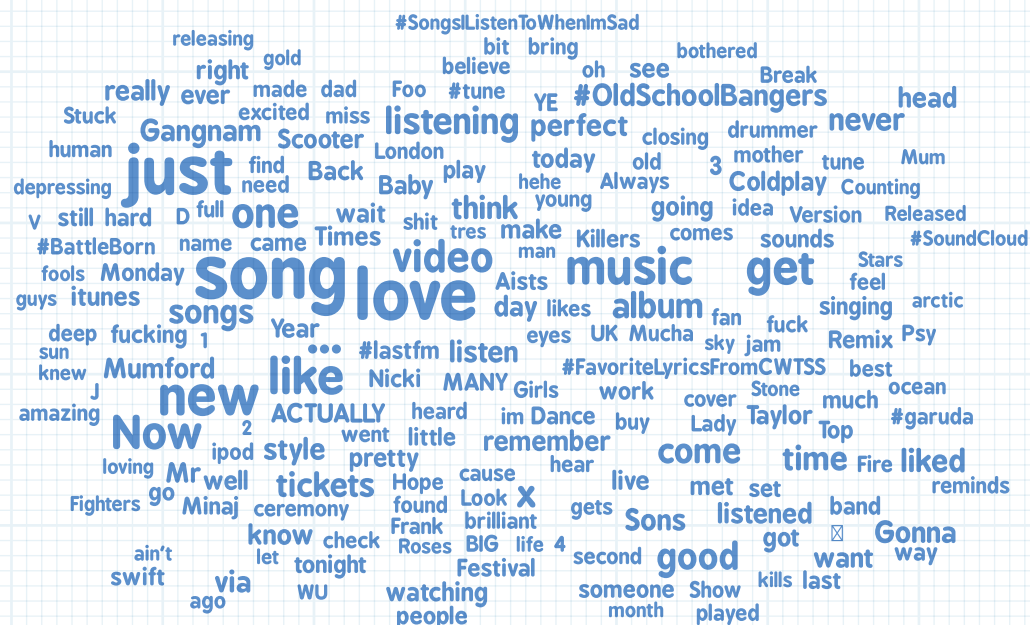
Sport Peaks Explained

- 10th/ Andy Murray wins US open after beating Novak Djokovic
- 23rd/ Formula 1 grand prix
Premier League game
(Liverpool & Manchester United)

Results/ Top Topic (3)

Keywords such as 'love', 'like', 'perfect', 'think' and 'feel' reflected the strongly evaluative nature of tweets about tracks and artists.

Tweets about music also frequently included phrases that indicate purchase intent, providing a great deal of potential for further analysis.



My Top 3 #lastfm
Artists: Joni Mitchell,
Terror Danjah &
Royal-T



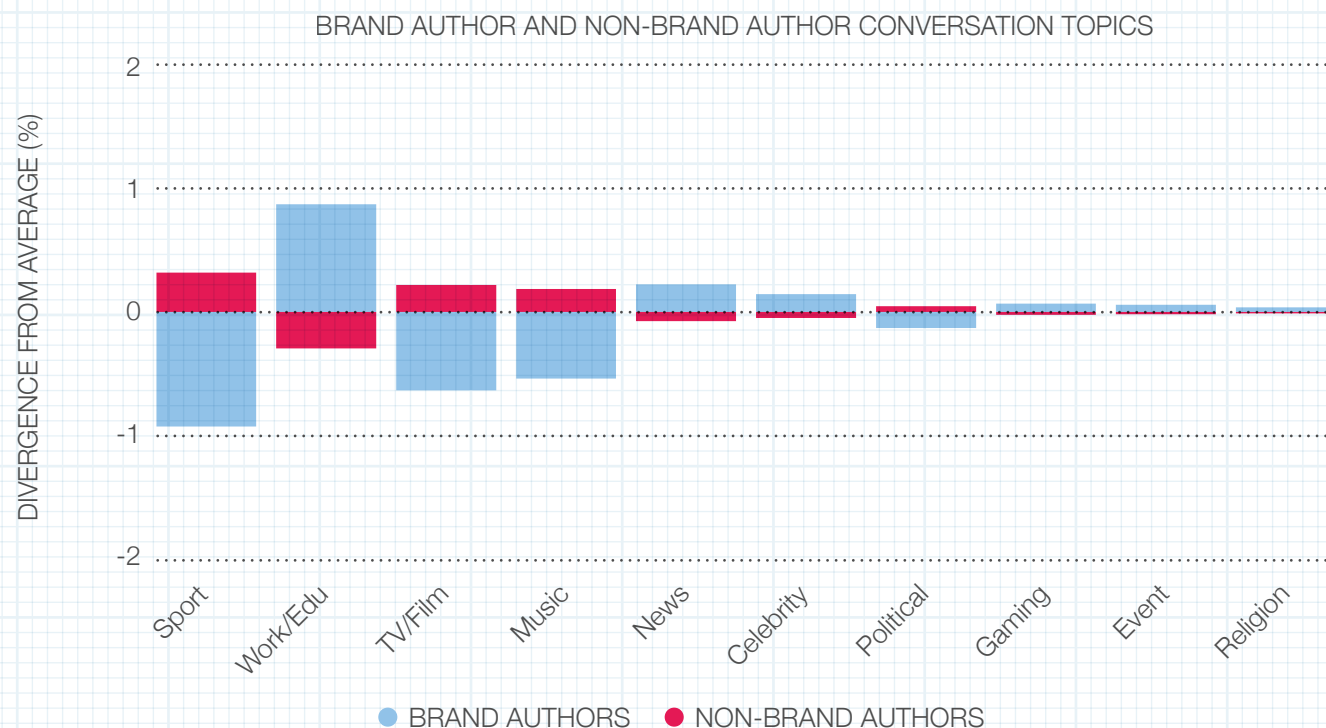
My dad just said
he's gunna buy Mumford &
Sons new album when
it comes out

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Results/ Brand Author Analysis

Here we focus on the conversation that mentioned brands, to understand more about how and why people tweet about companies and their products and services

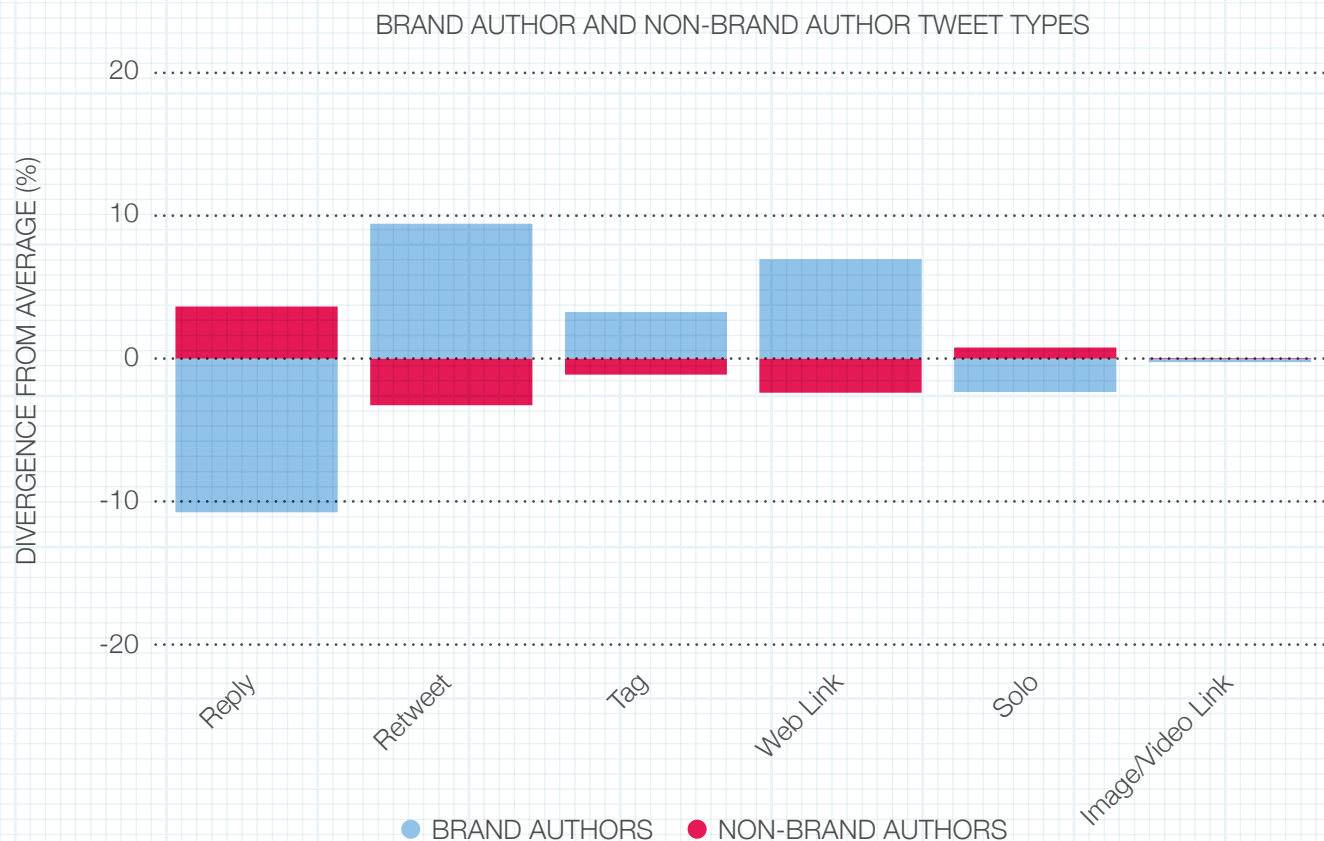
Authors mentioning brands were significantly more likely to also include work or education in their tweets than authors who didn't mention brands, and less likely to comment on sport, music and television.



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Results/ Brand Author Analysis/ cont...

Other attributes of brand vs non-brand tweeters included less inclination to tweet replies, lower overall tweet frequency and lower followers on average.



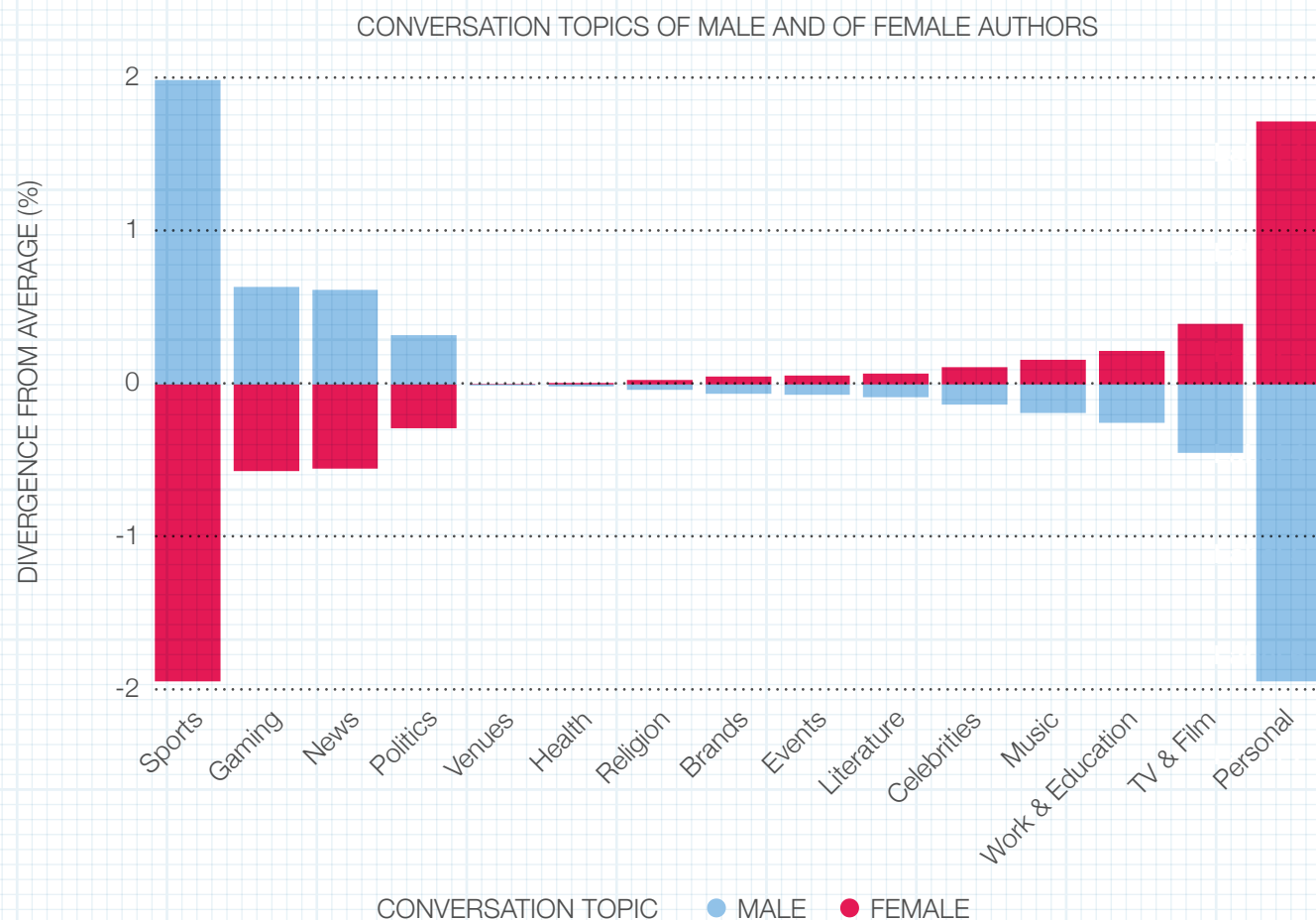
Brand mentions were more likely to be retweets than replies, suggesting that users were more inclined to publicise brands passively rather than actively creating content.

However, the above average level of web links and tags did indicate that authors were bringing brands to the attention of other, specific users and that this process was well-integrated with online content elsewhere via inclusion of URLs.

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Results/ Gender Analysis

Topics



Male-dominated topics:

- Sport
- Gaming
- News
- Politics

Female-dominated topics:

- Television
- Work
- Education
- Music

The Twitter Landscape /2013

Results/ Gender Analysis/ cont...

Female authors are significantly more likely to tweet about 'personal' matters

Our topic analysis showed 'personal' tweets to be the most female-dominant topic. Furthermore, by studying pronoun frequencies, we can see that males and female post a similar amount of tweets using the 2nd person ('you', 'your' etc) and 3rd person ('they', 'their' etc) but that females use the 1st person substantially more than their male counterparts.

Twitter conversation displays similar gender-specific patterns to speech.

This self-orientated stance of female Twitter usage, compared to the more detached tone of male usage, aligns with past studies done on the role of gender in speech and language. Consequently, powerful inferences can be made about gender-specific online behaviour matching that of the offline world.



My feet are killing me. Me and Kirsty literally danced for 2 hrs non stop!!

Twitter/ Female 1st Person



Being the 1% of the population that doesn't own anything from Jack Wills

Twitter/ Male subject omission

The Twitter Landscape /2013

Results/ Gender Analysis/ cont...

Females were more likely to mention brands with language in the 1st person than males.

Though rare, the first person register was associated with the richest sources of consumer voice. These were the comments most likely to be valuable both from a publicity viewpoint and for understanding consumer behaviours.

This finding revealed a divide between two types of Twitter behaviour: the first, characterised by a lack of personal pronouns, was more likely to be male. The second, rarer type of author was more likely female and discussed brands and products in relation to their own offline experiences, i.e. in the first person.



Twitter/

I love the way my hand thinks I have disposable income and accidentally orders a new dress and jacket from River Island today...
#oops'



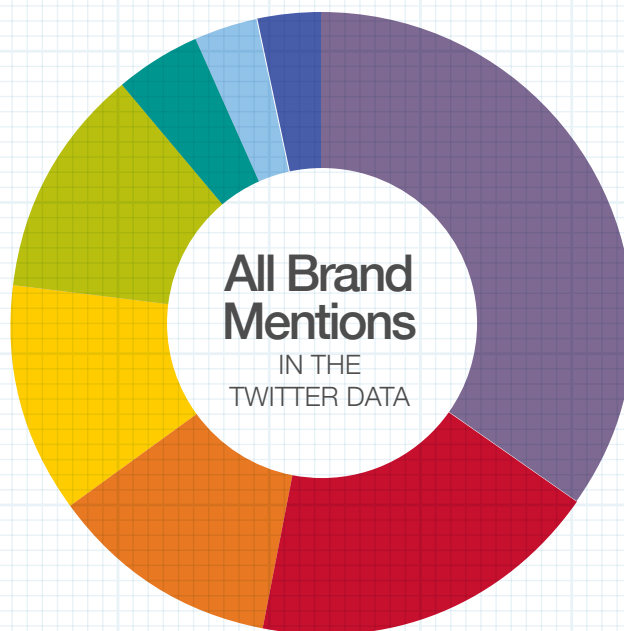
Twitter/

First time I've ever had pop tarts. They're so sweet I feel sick!

The Twitter Landscape /2013

Results/ Brand Focus

Overview



- **32%** Food & Drink
- **17%** Clothing & Accessories
- **11%** Technology
- **11%** General Retail
- **11%** Entertainment
- **4%** Transport
- **3%** Beauty Products
- **3%** Professional Services

Brands mentioned ranged from large names such as Amazon and Ford to smaller companies like Azendi and Micro Scooters.

Equal numbers of products and services were mentioned, suggesting no bias to secondary or tertiary sectors. B2C brands were though, unsurprisingly, far more prominent than B2B equivalents.

● 27% Male ● 73% Female



The first thing many people do during a break is tweet.

The disproportionate volume of tea brands mentioned demonstrated the tendency of authors to tweet during breaks and to discuss their immediate surroundings; the dominance of fast food brands also reflects this immediacy.

A donut chart with a white center. The chart is divided into two segments: a large red segment representing 80% and a smaller blue segment representing 20%. The chart is set against a light blue grid background.



A notable tendency amongst clothing conversation was to express mental tension between the intent to purchase and apparent deterrents, such as the shopping environment, brand reputation or expense.

A donut chart illustrating the frequency of app usage. The chart is divided into two segments: a large blue segment representing 'Daily' usage at 75%, and a smaller red segment representing 'Occasionally' usage at 25%.

Frequency	Percentage
Daily	75%
Occasionally	25%

● 80% Male ● 20% Female



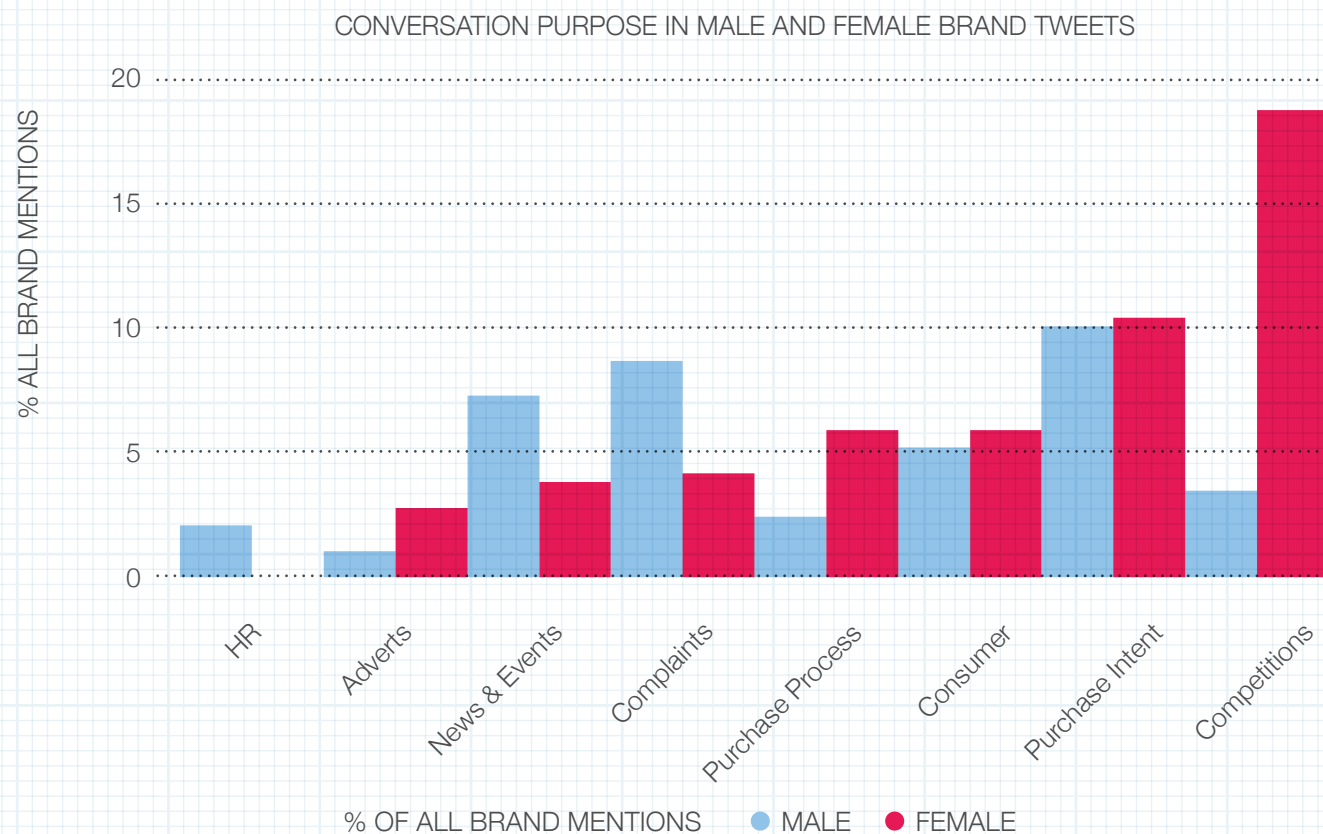
In contrast to the other major brand types, technology brand conversation was male dominated. The dates of the analysed corpus correlated with the release of the iPhone 5, which naturally triggered substantial online buzz.

Technology brand tweets were markedly more comparative in nature with authors reviewing and discussing competing products, unlike fashion brands tweets which demonstrated greater brand-loyalty and fewer comparisons.

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Results/ Brand Focus & Context

Males complain more frequently, while females talk about purchase experiences and enter competitions more.

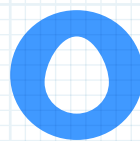


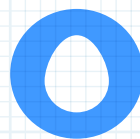
The Twitter Landscape /2013

Results/ Brand Focus/ Competitions

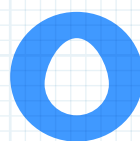
Retweet competitions are a particularly common but not necessarily effective form of promotion on Twitter.

Below is an example of an account used only for Twitter competitions. The profile has been anonymised in accordance with the methodology.

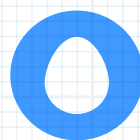
 Follow [@cultboxtv](#) and RT for a chance to win a 'Lord of the Rings & The Hobbit Collection' boxset – More info: bit.ly/XECgwj [#LOTRCB](#)

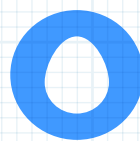
 We've got a fabulous advent Christmas giveaway for you. To WIN 2 advent candles & holders just RT & follow. Ends 12pm 29th Nov! Good luck

 [#win](#) a prize from This is Nessie on the [@Mummyvswork](#) Christmas countdown. 1 new giveaway a day!! [#Competition](#) mummyvswork.co.uk/2012/11/christ...

 [#win](#) a copy of Prima Princess on DVD on the [@Mummyvswork](#) Christmas countdown. 1 new giveaway a day!! [#Competition](#) mummyvswork.co.uk/2012/11/christ...

 [#win](#) some funky wellies from [@poconido](#) on the [@Mummyvswork](#) Christmas countdown. 1 new giveaway a day!! [#Competition](#) mummyvswork.co.uk/2012/11/christ...

 [#win](#) a Christmas gift from [@hallmarkUK](#) on the [@Mummyvswork](#) Christmas countdown. 1 new giveaway a day!! [#Competition](#) mummyvswork.co.uk/2012/11/christ...

 [#win](#) a Christmas gift from [@GreenPeopleUK](#) on the [@Mummyvswork](#) Christmas countdown. 1 new giveaway a day!! [#Competition](#) mummyvswork.co.uk/2012/11/christ...

The most drastic gender split was found in those entering competitions via Twitter. Many of the tweets driven by competitions came from hollow accounts that were used solely for this reason and posted tweets of no other kind.

Twitter competitions are often targeted with increasing the brand's social reach, but a high proportion of retweets (the most frequently used form) come from those with few or no followers. This limitation on the effectiveness of such promotions can even have a negative impact on brand image if hollow/spam accounts become associated with the competition.

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Results/ Brand Focus/ Ad Response

Feedback on advertisements, particularly TV-based, is a regular theme for tweeters.

In the hundreds of tweets about TV/ film (3.75% of the total dataset), many expressed opinion about ads – some just passing commentary, some direct responses to the brands:



Twitter/

That Twix advert really makes me want a Twix, must say excellent advertising'



Twitter/

The new @marksandspencer advert is really good, I can imagine sales increasing.'



Twitter/

Have the Olympics finished yet? If they have, can McDonalds please take down those piss-weak [...] posters at Euston?



Twitter/

Rachel's Organic Yoghurt advertisers take note: having a woman with a sultry voice saying "slips" over and over will not make yoghurt sexy.

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Recommendations for Brands/

Twitter is a substantial source of opinion and experience about brands – it needs to be analysed, understood and acted upon accordingly.

Brands were mentioned in 3.6% of all tweets, making the topic more popular than music or celebrities.

Engage with Twitter in a similar manner to your audience in order to maximise authenticity and develop a human persona.

For example, comment and take part in big cultural and sporting events and, where appropriate, talk personally, about experiences and immediate surroundings.

Clear differences in the behaviour of males and females should be accounted for when running campaigns and measuring brand performance on Twitter.

Males complain more frequently, while females talk about purchase experiences and enter competitions more. This requires brands to be cautious when comparing the customer service or promotional performance of brands with differing target audiences.

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Recommendations for Brands/ cont...

Traditional (i.e. offline) understanding of gender-specific behaviour should be acknowledged in Twitter research and communication.

Our findings show that males and females demonstrate similar differences in behaviour and language on Twitter compared with the spoken word.

The limitations of promotions such as retweet competitions should be recognised and measurements sufficiently robust.

Many accounts on Twitter have no followers and exist purely for entering competitions, thus potentially artificially inflating retweet numbers making them a poor reflection of success. Reach metrics that also account for the number of followers each retweeter has can start to give more accurate insight.

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Thank you /

We hope you enjoyed The Twitter Landscape: 2013 and have taken some useful things away from our analysis. Brandwatch is an incredibly powerful tool for understanding large datasets whether on Twitter or further afield in blogs, forums, review sites, news and more. We also conduct special reports for clients on an ongoing basis, so please get in touch to discuss your specific needs or book a live demo of Brandwatch.

/about Brandwatch

Brandwatch is one of the world's leading social media monitoring tools, with offices in the UK, US and Germany.

Innovative brands and agencies all over the world use Brandwatch for:

Research – Understanding the market

Sales – Identifying leads

Customer Service – Responding and engaging quickly

Marketing – Targeting new networks

Reputation Management – Limiting negativity and building on positivity

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