Access for all and for how long?

Claudia Serbanuta * Tiffany Chao * Aiko Takazawa
University of Illinois @Urbana-Champaign
What's happening?

- Microblog platform online since 2006
- Used also with cellphones through SMS
- Over one Million tweets a day:
  *From August 2006 to August 2008, Twitter users created \( \approx 100,000 \) books worth of content, 140 characters at a time (Milstein et al., 2008)
- 6 millions (2008) and 18 millions (2009) US adult users (emarkete.com)
- More open means of mass information sharing across a more expansive social network
What's happening?

www.twitter.com

Used for:

- conversations,
- descriptions of activities,
- information sharing through URLs,
- current news events.

“Secrets”

- posts are called tweets
- at sign-@ used for information exchange, communication (response, comment, etc.)
- RT (re-tweet) to repost somebody else's message
- # hashtag used to create “groupings”
What's happening?

Twitter Revolution in Moldova

#pman the first european revolution is live, on twitter
“If you bothered to check the most popular discussions on Twitter in the last 48 hours, you may have stumbled upon a weird threat of posts marked with a tag "#pman" (it's currently listed in Twitter's "Trending Topics" along with "Apple Store", Eminem, and Easter)”

(Evgeny Morozov – Moldova's Twitter Revolution - neteffect.foreignpolicy.com)
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Moldova's "Twitter Revolution"

As several Moldovans posted "pman" in their Twitter messages, an official in the country warned they could be arrested for "propaganda". The term is typical for the country's internet censorship, but popular protests have never been banned before.

CBS news reports that "While Moldova's President Moldovan's first ever public radio interview was expected to silence the protests, the president, as he made his way to the studio, was met by a mob of hundreds of angry demonstrators chanting, "down with the president)."

BBC

Moldova's 'Twitter revolutionary' speaks out

The Moldovan capital, Chisinau, April 8, 2009

On Friday, Moldova's national opposition leader, Vlad Plahotniuc, was able to speak to the media for the first time since his arrest over the weekend.

He was charged with subversion and incitement to violence after hundreds of protesters flooded Moldova's streets in a demonstration against the electoral results.

Plahotniuc, who had been leading a campaign to unseat President Nicolae Timofti, said he would not cooperate with the authorities.

"I'm going to continue my public activity," he said. "I'm not going to go away just because of this."
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What's happening?
twitter.com vs twitter revolution
About Moldova

Fast facts:

• Population of 3,567,500
• GDP per capita of less than $2,500

Information and Communication Technology usage (2009)

• Internet penetration rate 5.2%
• mobile penetration 76.1%
• for every 100 mobile users, 54 were utilizing the multimedia features which included accessing the internet.
What's happening?

It's not a Joke! April Fool's online smart mob

"Light gets switched on only for the ones that can see, not for the blind."

Mihai Eminescu (Romanian poet)
I am Anti-Communist protest

“April 6 – National Day of Mourning

If you did not vote for the Communist Party - take a candle and get out on the street!!” (curaj.net)
What's happening?

Moldova civil unrest

April 7, 2009

• 30,000 protesters
• Violence and vandalism of Presidency and Parliament buildings
• Images posted on Internet
• Opposition parties cannot prove the elections were riggered

April 8-11, 2009

• Protests continue and are non-violent
• 200 young people are arrested from the streets
• Protests lose public support
• 3 people dead
What's happening?

Number of tweets per hour posted on #pman
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![Chart showing tweets per hour with notable spikes on April 7, 2009 and April 9, 2009. The chart highlights violence at Presidency and Parliament buildings and support protests in Romania. There is a note that few people came to protest at the announced "New Revolution."
Contribution of Twitter users to #pman

- 28,500 messages
- 1,918 Twitter users
- On the average 14.8 messages per user
- 10.7% tweets were links
- They were RT on average 2.6 times
What's happening?

Small and new media linked from #pman

http://www.wordle.net/
What's happening?

Was it or was it not a Twitter Revolution?

A small number of protesters that used Twitter "managed to keep the entire global Twittersphere discussing an obscure country for almost a week only proves that Twitter has more power than we think. That only 80 users have blown this story out of any proportion to me looks like the clearest indication that our public sphere is getting democratized"

(Evgeny Morozov
Moldova Twitter revolution is NOT a myth
neteffect.foreignpolicy.com)
Is it worth preserving?

There exist preservation efforts of online content related to social and emotional events.

So far for actual usage and influence of digital media in modern conflict situations, there is “mostly anecdotal evidence”

(Ivan Sigal - Digital Media in conflict-prone societies)

#pman messages from April 2009 not accessible on twitter.com anymore
What's happening?

Is it worth preserving?

Who's archiving?

• Ethan Zuckerman (Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard Law School) archived and analyzed the #pman tweets
• twapperkeeper.com created by “Start-Up hacker at night”

What's missing

• Recognizing the research potential of this data
• Archiving the online network – including the external URLs to various sites like multimedia venues
• Trust when utilizing user-contributed content as primary source for research
• Archiving standards and documentation
Learn and do not be afraid of different languages

What's happening?

I

neata, propun sa utilizam tag-ul &lt;a href="http://search.twitter.com/search?q=%23pman"&gt;&lt;b&gt;#pman&lt;/b&gt;&lt;/a&gt; pentru mesajele din piata marii adunari nationale
We have to pay attention to what scholars need

It seems to be rather indisputable that social media tools can be very effective in

- documentation
- publication
- dissemination
- conscious-raising

Depending on the conflict in question, and depending on the movement or campaign at focus, this very quality may even be the most significant.

Maximilian C. Forte - "This failed revolution, powered by Twitter"
What's happening?

Thank you @all and #BOBCATSSS2010. Questions?