Interaction patterns among Swedish Twitter users

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Abstract

I have in my study chosen to study about Swedish Twitter usage in the following areas usage, follow, followers, privacy, technique, writing and professional scenarios. In my pre-study a qualitative study was conducted by interviewing six persons from Sweden that actively uses Twitter about their insight into usage, follow, followers, privacy, technique, writing, professional. A quantitative study was performed by asking users 20 questions about their Twitter usage and habits. Initially I had hoped after a discussion with my supervisor Mathias Klang to receive 30 responses but received 78 responses to my survey. In these interviews it was revealed that there are no correlations in what a Swedish Twitter user Tweet. However research revealed that there are a correlation about what a user does not Tweet, personal updates since they do not feel the need to share these with others. Furthermore user does not want to use localization services on Twitter since they do not want to broadcast where they are. What is important for a user to decide if they want to follow another user is what is written in their biography since it shows info about the user. If a user Tweets too often so that it fills another users timeline, it is common that a user unfollows them since they do not see the other people that they follow in their timeline. After further research it was revealed that the two favorite Twitter clients among my interviewees and respondents to my survey is the official web client Twitter.com and TweetDeck.

Key words: Twitter, micro blogging, tweet, interaction, information overload.

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Micael Samuelsson, 2011-05-23

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1.0 Introduction

Microblogging is defined as short updates about daily activities, meant to keep people up to date on what is currently happening. Popular micro blogging platforms are Tumblr, Twitter and Facebook. Finin et al, (2006) suggests that micro blogging fulfills a need for an even faster type of communication. With posts being shorter with micro blogging there is less need to think about what is micro blogged. These posts can include a link, video or picture. Furthermore Beltrao et al, (2009) suggest that micro blogging can be useful when reporting from conferences.

Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone and Florian Descheler launched twitter five years ago, originally under the name 'twttr'. March, 21, 2006. A Tweet was originally designed to be 140 characters so that it could also be shared via SMS. What made interest of Twitter peek was during 2007 version of South by Southwest festival when the people behind Twitter placed two television screens there so that people could see the live-stream. This increased the daily tweets from 20 000 to 60 000 per day. Finin et al,(2006) suggest that different micro blogging platforms has different motivations.

A Tweet is described as a 140 letters text based conversation that can include i.e. a mention with another username or a link to another site. Boyd (2010) a Retweet is the equivalent of email forwarding, where users posts Tweets originally Tweeted by others. A Tweet can be Retweeted by another user so that they reappear in the Retweeters timeline and Twitter.com timeline over the latest Tweets from the users.

There a two version of Retweet available; one which is the official which Retweets it into your own timeline and a second one which puts an 'RT' in front the original Tweeters username and text. In front of the 'RT' you can add your own text also known as 'Retweet with comment'

Twitter has evolved into adding new functions such as lists, which allows you to follow users more closely and # hashtags for discussions. These lists can either private or public so that everyone can follow these lists. Finin et al, (2006) suggests that the ability to categorize users into different groups (home, work, fun) can lead to an increase adoption rate of micro blogging platforms. These hashtags allows users to search for a discussion and can be found by searching for it. If the # hashtags has enough users it can be a trending topic.

I have been a member of Twitter since 2008 and have been a part of the evolution. In the beginning it was a communication tool, where you can both connect and reconnect with contacts. The last three years I have been a part of the Consumer Electronics show and have seen Twitter usage change. Before only a few used it but now it is more commonly accepted as a networking tool between Tweeters at the Consumer Electronics show each year.

Furthermore several studies, including Riecken (1994), Van Zandt (2001), and Cambouropoulos et al, (2000) suggests that as computers are becoming integrated with services, users will need help with dealing about the information and work overload. Therefore a system may not be needed or a system with the correct incentives may need to be created so that, where a case change may not be needed.

Kiel et al. (1994) studied why an information system that has million of dollars in development are either never used or avoided by the people who are supposed to use them. Their study concluded that system does not improve the organizational performance or the business value. It is the users and managers that do.

Therefore there are two alternatives when creating a system; changing the incentives or create a system, which brings together system use and performance improvement.

I can therefore assume that if a system is corrected with the correct incentives for the users, the users will arrive for the system.

In September 2010 I was part of a project at Borås University, in which parliament member's presence on Twitter was analyzed. This study investigated which party each parliament member belonged to, who they followed and who followed them. Compared to previous parliament elections this one was especially interesting since we saw a new way of communicating between elected parliament members and voters. Mathias Klang University of Gothenburg/Borås University and Jan Nolin Borås University ran this project and I would like to thank them since it was a learning experience that I have not had before.

1.1 Problem description and analysis

Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length (Jansen et all, 2009). In a tweet you can include a mention for another user with an @ followed by the users username. These Tweets are not only displayed on the user timeline but also on Twitter.com timeline. A Tweet can be forwarded by another user with Retweet, which means that that the Tweet that has been Retweeted will be displayed by in the users timeline that has Retweeted it and a second time in Twitter.com timeline.

"If you lock one thing you end up locking everything"

When asked about when they started Tweeting the answers ranged from when media and others first started talking about it to when one was number 10 on the Christian democrats parties list to get elected to Swedish parliament and how she he had a chance of getting elected. Furthermore when they were asked the question about how their communication has changed on Twitter since they started I was told how one did not know if there was a 'social code' on Twitter and if you could just Tweet anyone on Twitter and how the interaction has gotten better on Twitter since they started Tweeting both when using # hashtags for discussion and communicating with other users on Twitter.

 In a Tweet you can share your location with other users so that when a user writes a Tweet, below the Tweet you can see 'Tweeted via'. When asking about if they use a localization service on Twitter the majority answered and said that they do not want to share their location with others but another user said that they have used the localization services and found that they did not provide an exact enough location, so that she did not

found it to be that big of an issue. In addition to this, what type of third party Twitter clients that each user used were using was important since it shows what type of third party services that is available to each user.

Furthermore, when asked about why they follow another user on Twitter a general response was that they had looked at the users Tweets and found them interesting, the users bio and if the user follows other users on Twitter to I follow everybody that follows me. This was followed by why a user unfollows another user on Twitter a general response was how another users spams another user's timeline.

Accordingly the question that needs to be answered is how does a Swedish user interact on Twitter?

1.2 Research question

The purpose of this thesis is to study what a Swedish users tweet on Twitter. Focus lies on what services are used, what makes a person on twitter start following another, Retweeting, what makes a user on Twitter unfollow another user and the controversy regarding privacy online. What type of Twitter client users use is of interest since this gives an insight into what services are available to users?

This thesis will attempt to answer the following question:

- How does a Swedish user interact on Twitter?

This gives a broad research question and thus provides a number of sub questions, which are as follows:

- What does a Swedish user Tweet about?
- What services do you use?
- What Twitter client do you use?
- What makes you follow or unfollow another person?
- Do you use any localization services in connection with Twitter?

1.3 Purpose statement

This study aims to show evidence on how Swedish users interact on Twitter. What services are used, the look on followers and following, privacy and usage. Depending on the outcome, this study could provide an area for further research and understanding into what is known as "social networks" "information overload" and "social media"

1.4 Scope and Delimitations

This study aims to show how Swedish users interact on Twitter. Although Twitter has existed since 2006, the study is constrained by that there is no definitive number on how many Swedish Twitter users there are currently.

1.5 Target audience

The outcome of this thesis can be of interest to the research community and people with an interest in social networks. The research community can benefit from the findings since it can provide an insight into the characteristics of a Swedish Twitter user, what, how and why they tweet.

2.0 Method

The following chapter gives an insight and understanding of the methodological approach chosen to investigate the subject. This includes a thorough description and evaluation of the research approach, applied method and the collection and selection of data. The purpose is to create a clear understanding of the methodological approach to analyze the empirical findings in which this thesis is drawn upon.

2.1 Initial planning

During the past year Twitter and other social networks have grown exponentially, which has led to increased coverage by academic research and contemporary media. Initially, data regarding the type of communication users have with their followers was collected to establish a baseline over a Swedish user. Key interviews were carried out with subjects to find out more about Twitter usage and why they tweet. Consequently, Twitter and what type of communication users have with their followers are interesting topics to examine further. After evaluating the results, emphasis will be put on purpose and scope of this thesis.

2.2 Selection

The participants consists of Twitter-users that actively tweets in both Swedish and English, tweeted a minimum of 200 times, follows over 100 persons and has over 200 followers. The reason is that among the respondents the interest varies from advanced to non-advanced. Common for the respondents is that they daily use Twitter.

2.3 Evaluating research method

This study can be defined as deductive since it looked at Swedish Twitter usage. What is tweeted? Is services used in these tweets and what services are used to write these tweets with support from the empirical findings.

Information gathering have been done through interviews and surveys. This was done by asking what does a user Tweet about? Is there any third party services used? Does the followed person follow the follower? What makes another user follow another user? What is the look on third party services online?

The primary research question and thus the hypothesis is how does a Swedish user interact on Twitter?

Six different Twitter users was interviewed to find out why they tweet, what they tweet, if third party services are used, do they follow the users they communicate with, and if their tweet habits have changed. During these interviews each subject was asked if they want to remain anonymous or if they would like their name published. These interviews were semi structured so that the questions could be rearranged or that new questions could be asked as follow up the interviewees responses.

2.4 Data collection

Qualitative data was been collected from interviews with Swedish Twitter users. Quantitative data has been collected by doing a survey about Swedish Twitter usage, which I had hoped to receive around 30 responses to but received 78. Initially literature about Twitter and social networks was studied to understand the width of the research work.

The purpose of this was to find previous academically research and theoretical framework that were applicable to Twitter and what type of communication exists with followers. These frameworks and research was collected via databases such as Gartner and Google Scholar. Earlier research was considered without any constraints when the research was executed. Excess, Google has also been used to find relevant academic research articles to guarantee a thorough research of available material. Key phrases such as "social media", "information overflow" and "information systems", "Twitter + media", "Twitter" have been used under these searches.

By doing a survey to users on Twitter to see what type of communication Swedish users are Tweeting about, quantitative data has been collected. In a survey we must rely on that we motivate individuals mainly through the content in the cover letter (Patel & Davidson, 2003).

The difference between an interview and survey is that the survey is oral communication while the survey is written communication (Ejvergård, 2003). For each questions the answers can be either tied or opened. Tied is that the answers are already predefined and that the respondent gets to answer the question upon the answers. Open means that a respondent can answer the question more freely. In a survey it is important to work systematically and create questions around each problem area so that each area of the research question has been covered. A survey does not give an option to supplement, like an interview does (Patel & Davidson, 2003).

Qualitative data has been collected through interviews. Through interviews you can find out the background for these tweets and what it is that the users want to communicate to their followers through usage, following, followers and privacy. If an interview is not done at the interviewee's workplace, it is conducted over the phone at a specified time and date. According to Patel & Davidson the purpose of qualitative interviews are observe and identify the nature and feature of the interviewed, e.g. observations about the specific items/things.

2.5 Interviews

Over four weeks I conducted six different interviews with persons that actively use Twitter from Sweden. These interviews were conducted semi structured, since I sometimes during these interviews improvised new questions to get a more extensive response and also rearranged the questions that I had created in advance to get a better flow of discussion during the interview. If I noticed an interesting response from a question I adapted that question into the next interview to see if I got the same answer during that interview. During each interview, each individual were asked if they were willing to divulge their name in my thesis. All but one said that they were willing to

share their answers. The one who were not willing to share his name is in later in my thesis referred as 'Person X'.

It is important to keep in mind that qualitative interviews can face issues. It is not always possible for the interviewer and interviewee to meet at good terms since issues can arise from cultural differences, different standings, etc. To succeed with an interview it is important that the interviewer can communicate with the interviewee, so that the later can communicate without feeling restricted (Patel & Davidson, 2003).

2.6 Survey

Over one week I conducted a survey with 20 different questions on Survey Monkey about Twitter the following scenarios, usage, followers, following, technique and privacy. Initially I had hoped to get around 30 responses to my survey but received 78 responses from Twitter users. The questions allowed dual answers so that I could get a better understanding if a person liked more then one function.

2.7 Sample sizes

The initial list of twitter users consisted of seven persons that were interviewed. However after a discussion with my tutor Mathias Klang, we agreed that each person should have a minimum of 150 followers, follow a minimum of 100 users and have tweeted a minimum of 200 tweets. This was agreed upon so that data gathered would come from users that actively use Twitter.

2.8 Privacy & Ethics

A question that I have to ask is the conversations covered in this thesis covered by the public principle or are they considered private conversations? Therefore I would like to argue that since you sign up for a membership you are a part of a conversation if the other user has a public profile. Users have to remember that what they write is both indexed and searchable on the web. If the other user has a locked profile so that everybody can not see the users latest Tweets it is not covered by the public principle.

"The principle of public access means that the general public and the mass media newspapers, radio and television are to be guaranteed an unimpeded view of activities pursued by the government and local authorities."

According to Ågren (2000) the question that we have to ask is if there arguments for dividing up place in cyberspace in private and public places or that we have to ask us if conversation that takes place in virtual forum and by that definition all virtual forums should be considered private places. Out of the six interviews, four took place at the interviewees workplace and two took place over the phone at a set date and time. During these interviews each interviewee was asked if they were willing to share their name and

one said yes that they would like their name to not be disclosed if possible. That person is later referred in this thesis as 'Person X'. The survey was anonymous and did not ask for any name or personal information from users.

2.9 Validity & Reliability

This study has collected data systematically and continuously. Information has been collected from following Twitter usage and interviewing users and systematically entered into an Word document

A change in the world picture can contribute to a change in Twitter usage. However over time this change will not affect the usage of Twitter. Through this reasoning one specific event should not affect the long-term events. A tweet is more or less defined as message of 140 characters or less, or more if third-party services such as Twitlonger are used. To gather information about Swedish Twitter usage a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods has been used. Six interviews with Swedish Twitters users have taken place either on the interviewee's workplace or over the phone at a scheduled time and date.

This was later used to cover everything from questions to theory, and this way the entire problem area was covered. To ensure the quality in both the interviews and surveys, it was later reviewed by Mathias Klang to ensure content validation. A change in the world picture can contribute to a change in Twitter usage. However over time this change will not affect the usage of Twitter. Through this reasoning one specific event will not affect the long-term events. Quantitative data has been collected through a survey with 20 questions that was supposed to take each respondent 15 - 20 minutes.

With reliability you can measure the certainty and occurrence of unsystematic errors of a method (Ejvegård, 2003). In this case it was not possible to measure reliability; other tools were used to measure reliability. It is possible to "store" reality so that registrations of events can be done afterwards. This can also be used to control interjudge reliability. The interview was recorded to ensure that nothing was missed while listening to them afterwards. If a question gets different answers from different interviewees in a qualitative study it is not a case of low reliability like it would be in a quantitative study (Patel & Davidson, 2007)

With validity researchers intend to measure what is supposed to be measured (Ejvegård, 2003). It is important to know what the measurement stands for and to use it consequently. First thing that one have to do in search for validity is to see how the measuring is done, e.g. counting how popular a Twitter client by counting how many Tweets is done by checking the API.

In quantitative research tradition the study object is supposed to have "true" value, which is accessible by being meticulous during the measurement. With this background "interviewer's effect" is used in quantitative research to measure the interviewers reliability. According to Patel & Davidson (2007) this is a measurement of how the interviewer acts during the interview.

There is no way of controlling what type of answers you get when conducting a survey. Instead you have to make certain that the person answering your survey understands the questions. This way it is possible to compare the results from the survey with the ones from the interview.

3.0 Theory

The following chapter gives an insight into the theory chosen to investigate the subject. This includes a thorough description and evaluation of the theoretical approach, and method. The purpose is to create a clear understanding of the theoretical approach.

3.1 Social Networks

Social Networks revolve around systems that are created to ease as well as create new ways of communication, either in your private or work life. Examples of social networks are Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace. The main goal in this thesis is to research what communication users on Twitter conduct with their followers. Twitter was described in the beginning as "online SMS". Each Tweet is 140 letters and has evolved with extension services such as Tweetlonger and bit.ly.

Furthermore de Moore, (2010) suggests that micro-blogging tools such as Twitter have great potential for supporting conversations in virtual communities. Central for this is the communicative loop, which is a part of the action/language part.

3.2 Information overload

Edmunds et al, (2000) there is no universal definition on information overload, it can mean several different things, e.g. dealing with information available on the World Wide Web or email coming in. The term 'overload' can mean that a user feels burdened by the situation or that the situation is getting out of control. The downside with information overload is that a user can spend more time processing the information, instead of utilizing the information. It also deals with issues such as timing issues, processing issues, information processing capacity, qualitative dimensions and subjective experience. On Twitter an information overload issue may be that a user feels that there is to much people in their timeline and decides on using the List function or hashtag for discussion on Twitter to get a better view on the Tweets that they see in their timeline.

A suggestion for better dealing with information overload is notifications from pre-selected sources that alerts when a new message has arrived. Twitters smartphones software handles information overload by sending out push notifications if the user was sent a mention or DM or a Twitter client such as TweetDeck which allows you to see if a user has sent you a mention, DM, list or hashtag that you have added to Twitter have been updated. If a user cannot handle the information that is coming in, e.g. if a user gathers more information, more data needs to be handled. A person can be hit with Information Overload even though that he may not realize that he has IO by the amount of information in front of him, i.e. Twitter Timeline have been updated with a lot more updates then usual. However if a user feels that the data in front feels too much, other areas will start suffering, e.g. work.

The available Twitter clients allows you to easier view your timeline so that you can easier handle the amount Tweets that are currently in your timeline, e.g. the official website Twitter.com. It allows you to cope with the Tweets in your timeline by having specific tabs for Mentions, Retweets, Searches and Lists.

By having these tabs Twitter allows you to divide your timeline into more tabs to get a better overview of information. It may like feel that it is too much information there currently. E.g. if a user can create a list to follow a specific set of users, that lists is now accessible by clicking on 'Lists' and getting a dropdown menu where you click on that list and get access to the list.
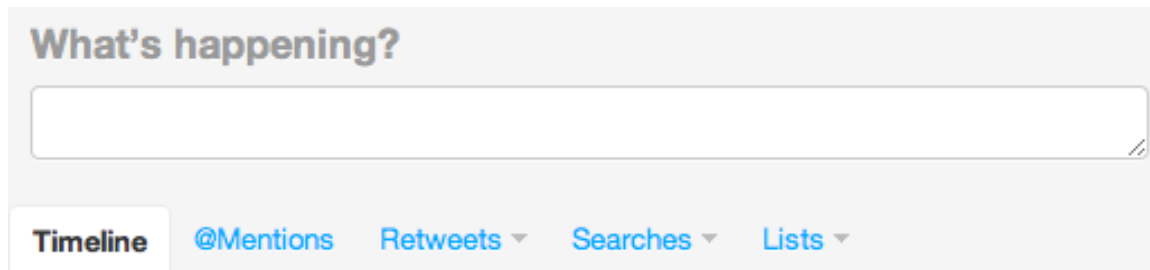
Twitter.com is like another website, the information is not there if you do not update the website, you do not have an updated timeline. To give users an specific idea on how many Tweets and how much information you having waiting, a button which shows you how many Tweets you have waiting and if it is clicked upon the time line is updated and gives you an updated view on the latest Tweets that you had not seen before.
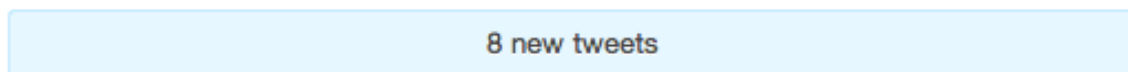
When accessing Twitter.com, Twitter has divided up the web client so that on the right side there is a view of the favored Tweets and lists that you are a part of. By doing it this way Twitter divides the channels that are they do not only get a timeline for both coming and current Tweets and older Tweets that a user wants to remember with favorites. By having the information in more channels use are able to more easily view what is being Tweeted about without having to much information at hand in front of them.

On Twitter I asked my followers "How do you handle information overload on Twitter?" Two of the responses that I got was "I get my unfollowhammer out and start swinging :)" and "yeah, same for me. I find following many more than 300 people is somewhat

unmanageable.". One can therefore draw the conclusion that a good way to handle information overload is not to follow to many people on Twitter.

Pijpers (2010) when speaking about information overload the following two terms are often used;

1. Information Anxiety
2. Information Fatigue Syndrome

Information Anxiety is the gap between what we understand and what we are thinking that we should understand. IFS is how the human physiology not being able to handle the amount data in front of it. A user could potentially face IFS if they have their Twitter timeline in TweetDeck if they have their Timeline, Mentions, lists and hashtags updated e.g. every fifteen minutes. Looking at all the new data, a user may not know how to handle all that new data. According to Pijpers (2010) IFS would not exist if only the data needed was showed.

This is how it could potentially look if a user feels that they may have IFS

Kwan Lee et al, (2004) argues that the way a product can be seen is defined by how the information is presented and processed by the consumers. A different Twitter client may help the users to better cope with the information in their Timeline. Since there are a lot of different Twitter clients available Twitter has a multitude of different options to help you cope with information overload. How information is delivered to the end user may cause Information Overload and how a person copes with this is related to a person's personal traits, attitudes and behavior. The different Twitter clients that are available offers different views of a user's Twitter timeline, and each client offers different ways of dealing with IO. Just because the most used Twitter client in my survey was TweetDeck, does not mean that it fits everybody. This is proved by Twitter.com and other clients has 27 % and 28 % of the usage.

For those feel that the information on Twitter is too much and do not know how to handle the information there is help through the hashtag #twitterakuten. If you add the

hashtag to your Twitter message others that have the hashtag saved will help you out and send you an answer if it is available to your question.

Pijpers (2010) argues that we are in the beginning of the information age and that we have not yet figured out how to deal with the information that we are facing or finding the information that is needed about a particular subject. He gives examples causes and symptoms on why a user is facing information overload and how the underlying cause may be so that the users are not able to cope with the information that are currently available. Furthermore he also argues that a way for users to deal with the information that is available may be to filter the information. Having more than one source of information can hurt the users instead of helping them. The different Twitter clients available allows users to view information in more than one way, allowing you to view both your timeline and lists to help you better cope with information overload.

Berghel (1997) the most typical form of information overload is when the web is trying to fulfill a dual role of both private and public information and communication medium. E.g. if information is drowned out by the background noise, the effectiveness of said information is lowered. A good suggestion for coping with information overload is to instead of focusing on information gathering, focus more on the work that is needed with the information that has been gathered. For example if a user feels that their timeline has to many Tweets from users they follow but do not unfollow anyone. A good way of coping with IO would be to use the list function on Twitter and base the lists based on e.g. interests to have easier channels of information. Of the information gathered, only five percent of the information will be used. What we do not know is what information that will be used in the end (Pijpers, 2010).

Users on Twitter could potentially face information overload if they the follow a lot of people and do not know how they follow their whole timeline. A good recommendation in that case could be to decide on a strategy in which the user looks at how they want to read the Tweets in their timeline and if they should create lists to create an easier way of coping with the Tweets by the users that they follow. Another Twitter client TweetDeck allows a user to cope with information overload by adding specific tabs over Timeline, Mentions, DM, Hashtags and Lists. If one of these are updated a notification window pops up telling you what has been updated. This pop up window can be customized to appear at a specific timeframe, e.g. every 30 minutes. However this can also be customized to not appear since an update that specific Hashatags, Lists, and Mention can bring a lot of information to the user at once, since a user may not be able to cope with the data that is updated. By turning of the update the user can go back into TweetDeck and check e.g. when they know what they are looking for or checking since one of their lists to the latest Tweets in it.

An important aspect to remember with Twitter is that the information is only there when you view it, no information is saved on your computer since the client you are using is communicating with Twitter's API and your timeline. For example one of my interviewees Annika Beijbom told me that when she goes on a trip she checks out of Twitter and checks back in when she is back from that trip. In my six interviews five out of the six interviewees told me that they do not back on Twitter and check what they have missed if they have not been in front of the computer for x amount of hours.

4.0 Explaining Twitter.com

Twitter can be used be from several different desktop clients but also from the default Twitter client available at http://www.twitter.com.

When you first log in at Twitter.com you are faced with a small window that asks you "What's happening?" In this window you can write a Tweet in up to 140 characters. There are several options on what you can include in this tweet, e.g. a mention for another Twitter user or a link that other users can access when they see your Tweet in their timeline.
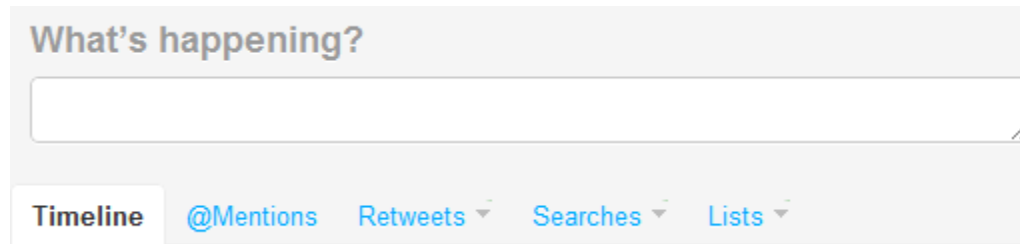
Below is an example of a Twitter window. You have five tabs that you can click on and access different areas of Twitter.com. With "Timeline" you can see the flow of Tweets from the persons that you are following and what they have tweeted about, if there is any links or users mentioned.
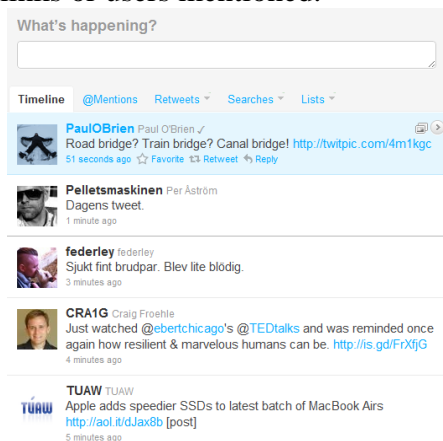
In "Mentions" you can see which tweets that you have been mentioned in, this could include a direct response on a Tweet that you have sent out or a Tweet that others want you to see and pings you with a mention in that Tweet.

If you want to include a tweet to another user you add an @ before the users username and that way the tweet is in their mentions.

"Retweets" are different from a regular Tweet because you forward another Tweet that user have mentioned in your timeline and Twitter.com's timeline, this way your followers will see the tweet another user made in their timeline.

"Searches" are also different because they revolve around what type of discussions you have participated in earlier and saved them for easier access at a later date or time by clicking on the hashtag discussion# and click on "save this search".

If you want to delete these searches you can do so by clicking on lists and the list that you want to access. When the list is open, there is a "delete this saved search" in the right corner. After this the deleted search will no longer be visible when you click on lists.

In "Lists" you can easily create a list containing users, who's Tweets will be more easily accessible. By doing this you have an easier way to follow people that you find more interesting. When you click on lists you can see the lists that you have created and which ones it is that you follow.

In "Lists by you" you can see what lists that you have created. If they are secret only you can see them, a small lock on the right of the list name will indicate this. If there is no lock on the right next to the list-name, it is open to the public and everyone can follow this lists.

In "Lists that you follow" you can see lists that others have created and that you have decided that you want to follow.

"Lists following you" shows which lists that you are a part of, who created the list and the name of the list.

4.1 Retweet

A Tweet can be described as a way to forward another Tweet on Twitter. There is two styles of Retweet on Twitter that can be described as with or without comments.

Retweet without comment was implemented by Twitter as a official Retweet solution. Showing the original Tweeters username, displayed name, when it was originally tweeted, when it was Tweeted the first time and who has Retweeted it. A Retweet usually includes a link to another website.

A Tweet can be Retweeted by hovering above the original Tweet. Below that Tweet a small 'Retweet' button will be displayed that gives you the option to Retweet the message and have it in your timeline and once again Twitter.com.

@GustafStenlund
Gustaf Stenlund

Härligt! RT @ghokmark: blivit ordförande politiska kommittén i Euronest parlamentariska församling,

21 hours ago via TweetDeck

Retweet with comment is recognized by an 'RT' in front of the original Tweeters user name and text. Before the 'RT' the user who Retweets the message can write their part of the Tweet. Only available in third party clients, i.e. TweetDeck and not officially implemented on Twitter.com. If a Retweet is longer then 140 characters you may opt to edit the original Tweet or use third party services such as Tweetlonger or Deck.ly to extended the available letters to be able to Retweet the full message. If you want to Retweet with comment on Twitter.com the first thing that is needed is to right click on the original username

4.2 Third-party services

4.3 Twitlonger

Twitlonger is a service that is used when the standard 140 characters are not enough when posting a Tweet on Twitter. The service is accessible by http://www.twitlonger.com and does not store your password. Instead it uses Twitters oath procedure, which allows you to use it by storing Twitlonger as an accepted application, which is allowed to be used and post directly onto your Twitter account. When people want to read a Tweet that is posted through Twitlonger, they are directed to the Twitlonger website.
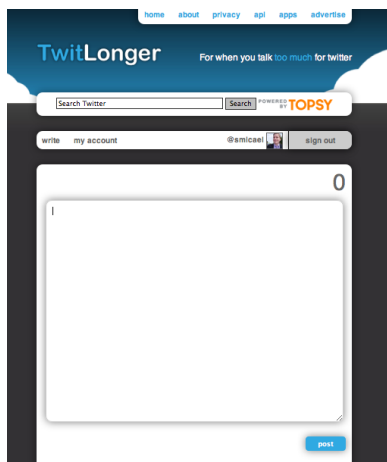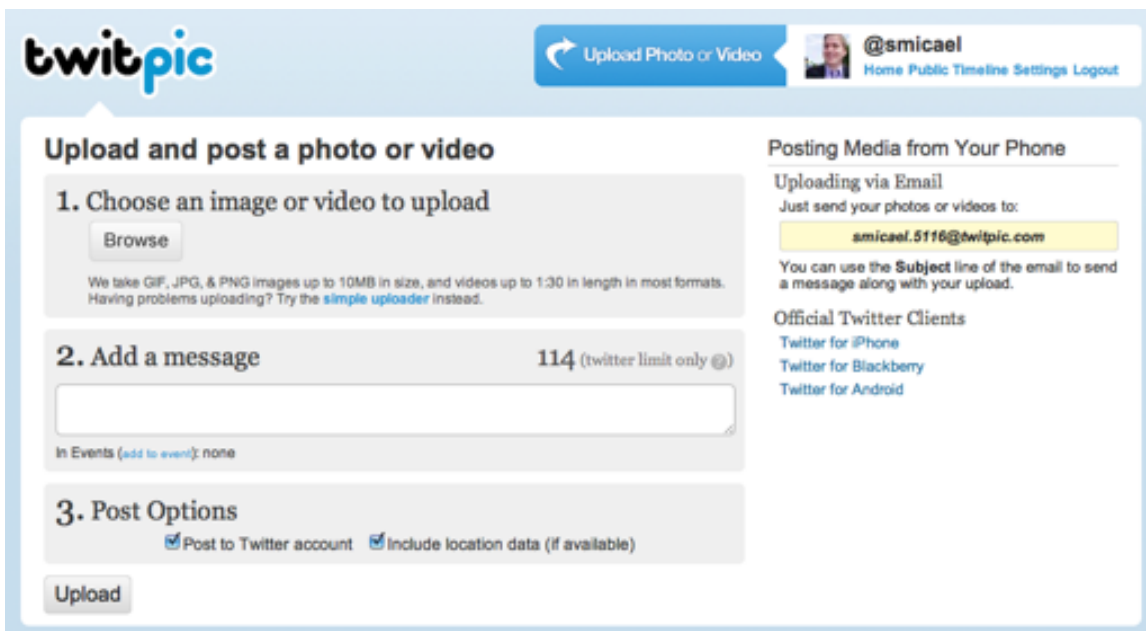
4.4 Post with pictures or video

There are a lot of pictures or video hosting websites for Twitter available but the focus for this part will be TwitPic and how you use it in conjunction with Twitter.com.

The first step is to upload the image or video that you want to Tweet. The second step is to add a message for this Tweet. Default after uploading a picture or video is that you have 140 characters available for your Tweet. After this there is an option to share the location where the picture was uploaded for others to see it on TwitPic.com

A second option is where pictures can be emailed onto Twitpic.com. Example of a user based email address for Twitpic is 'smicael.5116@twitpic.com'. In this email you add the message that you want to be displayed in the subject line.

5.0 Glossary

Twitter services

Tweet – message of 140 characters or less, that can be sent from your smart phone or computer.
ReTweet – You forward another person's tweet to your followers. Two versions are available; with or without comments from the person that forwards it.
Tweeted – Used when talking to others about a message that just have been Tweeted.

Unlocked accounts – accounts can be viewed by anybody
Locked accounts - Accounts are locked and only the followers of these accounts can view the content

Third-party services

TwitLonger – Gives you the option sending longer Tweets if it does not fit in 140 letters
TwitPic – Third-party service that allows you to share videos and pictures with others in Tweets
Plixi – Third-party service that allows you to share pictures
Yfrog – Third-party service that allows you to share pictures
Bit.ly – Gives you the option of shortening links so that they do not take up the entire tweet.

Third part Twitter clients

Seesmic Twhirl
Tweetdeck
Seesmic
Echofon
Twitter.com

6.0 Results

Part of the exploratory/pre study that was done before defining what type of communication users has on Twitter seen from a Swedish perspective was interviews. The interviews were to get a better understanding of how the respondents connected Twitter with other services and what clients they currently used to Tweet. Furthermore it looked into how users view followers and following. Respondents were asked about their look at privacy and what they Tweet and not Tweet about.

6.1 Approach

The interviews were based on single semi structured interviews with each person in a group of six persons total. Each of these interviews was qualitative, which is suitable for a low grade of standardization, i.e. questions that can be adapted during the interview (Patel, 2003). Since the interviews was built around a single focus group, thus they have been controlled as possible but they have been built around the following eight categories with connection to Twitter:

1. Usage
2. Technique
3. Writing
4. Followers
5. Following
6. Services
7. Professional Role
8. Privacy

6.2 Description of the interviewees

Caroline Szyber: 29 years old and resides in Stockholm. Currently works as a Parliament member for the Christian democrats party in Sweden and member of the committee of justice. Other work includes replacement member for the European Union Affairs and Constitutional committee.

Twitter-id: @carolineszyber

Annika Beijbom: Runs Beijbom publisher, and consulted on social media for companies as well as Swedish Television. Ran for a seat in the European Parliament in the 2009 election. Started the hashtag #twitterakuten for people to ask questions about Twitter and get quick response from other users on Twitter.

Twitter-id: @annikabeijbom

Susanne Enzfors: Works as a marketing and communications director for improvese in Stockholm, Sweden. Active Tweeter and believes in being open and transparent on the web. Currently Tweets from seven different accounts.

Twitter-id: @ennazus

Dag König: Works at Microsoft Sweden as developer evangelist. Interested in everything mobile. Loves to Tweet and the interaction that he can have with others on Twitter in projects that he is currently participating in.

Gustaf Stenlund: Works for the Moderate Party and Filippa Reinfeldt in Stockholm as a press secretary. Likes that he can comment on both the moderate party's politics and opposing parties politics. Active user of the RT function to comment on others Tweets.

Twitter-id: @gustafstenlund

Person X: Name not display since the respondent declined on the question if his/her information could be published in this thesis.

Twitter-id: not disclosed

6.3 Usage

This area gives an insight into what techniques Swedish user on Twitter use, are third party services often used and what clients they use to Tweet from since it also shows what third party services are available to the user.

When did you start using Twitter?

Name	Date
Suzanne Enfors	July, 2008
Dag König	March, 2007
Person X	November, 2009
Annika Bejibom	November, 2009
Gustaf Stenlund	January, 2009
Caroline Szyber	January, 2010

What made you start using Twitter?

Person X started with Twitter as a way of interacting with others during certain events as well as the people who could not attend that specific event. Caroline Szyber told me during her interview that she saw the potential of Twitter when she first heard that she was number 10 on the Swedish Christian party's list for the Swedish parliament election in September, 2010.

"Fantastic opportunity to sit 1000 persons in the audience and be able to comment, get background information and see whom else is there"

Gustaf Stenlund started with Twitter two years ago when newspapers and magazines first started talking and writing about it. Dag König registered with the service four years ago because he thought the idea behind the service was good but that there was no real user base behind the service at that time. Around two years ago when other users, both Swedish and international, started using the service he started again with his registered account. While Suzanne Enfors started using Twitter a couple of years ago, but got bored since she and a friend where the only one there. This made her switch to Bloggy since there were a lot more Swedes there and threaded comments, but when mobile applications were launched for Twitter she made the switch back to Twitter. Martina Lind got Annika Beijbom to start Tweeting during an event for Folkpartiet here in Sweden for back channel communication that had not been possible without Twitter.

What time in the day do you tweet the most?

Person X prefers to use Twitter during events and does not have a specific time when he tweets the most. Usually this is when he is mobile, has information to share and can have an exchange of views with others. The only problem for him for this is that the browser is not always the best way to follow links from other at the events. Suzanne Enfors said that she prefers to Tweet during the morning and evening, but she pointed out that if she has some spare time during the day she sits down and Tweets.

Annika Beijbom told me that this she runs her own company, the work days fluctuates for her so when Tweets varies but it is during work time, but is during Monday – Friday.

Dag König tweets the most during the morning. Caroline Szyber said that this depends on what type of meeting she is attending and on what type of meeting it is, it varies based on whether it is right or wrong to share the information. Usually it is Monday – Friday. By doing it this way you can share information and have an exchange of views with other participants of the meeting. Gustaf Stenlund said that he often Tweets during the morning and he does not have any specific time when he Tweets the most.

Do you answer a person with an avatar faster then a person without an avatar?

This question divided my respondents into two groups; one group said that when they see default avatar on Twitter (also known as the twitter egg) they are not that quick to answer as if they had gotten a response from a person with an avatar that showed themselves of. Caroline Szyber and Suzanne Enfors said she tries to be quick to answer regardless of what avatar the user that tweets to her has. A common response was that what is important is not the avatar but what is in the users bio.

Annika Beijbom said that she answers a person quickly no matter what type of avatar a user has. If a user has Twitter's default avatar it takes longer time for her to start follow that user.

Example of user with the default Twitter egg as an avatar

Gustaf Stenlund's reasoning was that if a person had a familiar name he would faster to respond, otherwise it takes the same time if a person has the default Twitter egg as an avatar instead of an avatar that they have uploaded of his or her own.

Example of user with an avatar that she has uploaded herself

This is also proven by the survey that I did, where 40.3 percent said that they answer a person with an avatar faster then a person without an avatar. 44.3 percent said that it does not matter if a person on Twitter has an avatar or not on Twitter. 18.2 percent of the users that answered this survey does not know if they answer a Tweet quicker if the users has an avatar or not.

What advantages/disadvantages do you see with Twitter?

Caroline Szyber emphasized on communication; you have the option of communication with your voters in a way that has not been done before. She can share more then her politics, she can share her personal life to show voters what type of person she is. Though, you have to decide how much you are willing to share and if you want to have a completely open account on Twitter.

As an example she highlighted people who in their bio writes that their opinion does not represent their employer and are purely my own. Dag König highlighted that he tweets as a private person and in his role as an evangelist for Microsoft, i.e. sharing the podcasts that he creates and participates in. Gustaf Stenlund said that with Twitter he can be present in a way he could not be before, many of his colleagues actively uses Twitter. As an example he mentioned that he could in his role as a press secretary for Stockholm connect with journalists that use Twitter and the option of commenting on other articles. Another advantage that he highlighted was how you conclude an article in 120 words and add an article next to it with a bit.ly link.

Annika Beijbom said that a conversation can evolve quickly if you have push notifications turned on your phone and it allows you to get a better overview on your Twitter conversation.

Suzanne Enfors compared Twitter to an oracle, you can ask questions and quickly get responses. The downside is that since it is only 140 letters it can cause misinterpretation. You have to remember to think about Twitter in a positive way then a negative way.

" One way to send out a question and actually get answers"

Person X looks at Twitter as a 'community'. You have the opportunity to ask question and have it answered by fellow twitterers. One can easily share links with others, what

information is in these links and that the information you share with others is more quickly accessible on Twitter than it would be in regular newspapers. The problem for him is that when you follow these links on your mobile/smartphone is that in most cases the browser cannot handle the link.

What time during the day are you the most active?

Gustaf Stenlund said that he is the most active on Twitter during the morning, while others like Person X is the most active during events when Tweeting does not have any specific time period when he Tweets the most. He highlighted that he would like to Tweet more but time is of the issue and he cannot follow Twitter as much as he would like to do. Other like Dag König uses Twitter as a communication medium on his spare time to share information about his podcasts and get response about them. While Caroline Szyber more uses Twitter during days and evenings then under weekends. Suzanne Enfors told me that she Tweets in her spare time and that one of her favorite things do on a Sunday afternoon is to sit down, open up Flipboard on her iPad and look through the latest Tweets. While Annika Beijbom said that she runs her own company, she works every day of the week and by that she Tweet every day.

6.4 Technique

This section is set to introduce which Twitter clients the respondents are currently using on their desktop and while mobile.

Each Twitter clients offers different usage scenarios and third party services. By asking what Twitter clients it is that my respondents is currently using it gives me an insight into their usage scenarios, i.e. what third party services it is that they are currently using when Tweeting.

While asking about what Twitter client is currently used on their phones, the overall response was that there was no favorite that had all the features needed. E.g. Caroline Szyber used Twitter's official web client Twitter.com. If she attaches a link to her Tweet's she used the third-party link shortening service bit.ly.

Dag König told me during the interview that he uses several different both desktop and mobile client. The reason behind this is that he has yet to find his personal favorite in either a desktop or mobile Twitter client.

"I have yet to find my favorite Twitter client"

Name of the respondent:	Desktop Twitter client:	Mobile Twitter client:
Suzanne Enfors	Tweetie for Mac	Twitter for iPhone/Twitter for iPad/Flipboard for iOS
Dag König	MetroTwit, Seesmic Desktop, TweetDeck	Panoramic MoTweets, Twitter for Windows Phone
Person X	TweetDeck	Twitter for Windows Phone
Caroline Szyber	Twitter.com	Echofon ,TweetS60

| Gustaf Stenlund | TweetDeck | TweetDeck for iPhone |
| Annika Beijbom | Twitter.com | Twitterific for iPhone |

6.5 Writing

Has your communication changed since you started Tweeting?

According to Caroline Szyber, the biggest difference between her communications today and when she first started Tweeting is that she answers much more quickly now.
As an example she highlighted discussions, an answer is much more actual at certain time then three days later. Person X and Suzanne Enfors told me that he did not se any change in his communication and that he sees it is a way of communicating with like-minded during events.

Gustaf Stenlund did not know if there was a "social code" in the beginning and if you could not answer anyone's Tweets, i.e. an influential person in 'real life'. Today he knows the conduct and how the communication on Twitter is built up. Annika Beijbom said that compared to when she started with Twitter there is few Tweets where she does not mention another user and that she is more open for a dialog.

Dag König registered his Twitter name four years ago when he first heard of the service and found it to be an interesting idea. Though he did not actually start using it a couple of years later when he saw that more people actually started using service.

What language do you Tweet in?

Caroline Szyber	Swedish and English
Person X	Swedish
Gustaf Stenlund	Swedish and English
Dag König	English and Swedish
Suzanne Enfors	Swedish, English
Annika Beijbom	Swedish, English, Dutch and French

What do you Tweet about?

Caroline Szyber tweets primarily about politics but also about her life outsides of the politics, for example she tweeted that she ate a good pancake on the Pancake Day. Dag Königs communication is more built on the work he does for Microsoft as a technical evangelist and to inform others about it so that they know how to use Microsoft technology properly. Suzanne Enfors told me that she Tweets about everything that

happens in her life. Annika Beijbom Tweets about work, politics and links from other users.

Gustaf Stenlund tweets primarily about moderate politics but also about his role as a press secretary for Stockholms city. While Person X Tweets primarily about information from events and gatherings.

What is not tweeted about on Twitter?

What Caroline Szyber does not Tweet about is; when she is out travelling on vacation, when she is out on the Town and about how hung-over she is the next day. Dag König and Annika Beijbomdoes not Tweet about personal items since he does not feel the necessity to share that with others. According to him there must be a barrier on what type of information you share and do not share. While others like Gustaf Stenlund does not Tweet about everything but that is also the same things that he does not talk about in 'real' life.

"I do not Tweet about anything that I can not stand for"

Person X does not write personal status updates, i.e. "I am on my way home" and work related tings. Suzanne Enfors does not Tweet about certain locations that she checks in at and about hatred since that is a strong word for her and that it can do a lot fo harm.

6.6 Following

If you do not follow all what makes you choose the ones that you follow?

According to Person X it is often individuals that he knows personally, knows what competence they have, individuals that have tipped him about something good and great big American personalities that can give valuable insight. Annika Beijbom follows users that follows her, but more then once she can have troubles following users since the client has issues from time to time.

In the beginning Gustaf Stenlund followed everyone, ranging from journalists to common persons with opinions. Today he follows persons that he has communicated with before and feels can give him valuable insight. Dag König looks at the emails he gets from Twitter.com and sees if it is an interesting person. Then he starts following. Suzanne Enfors told me that she follows a person that she thinks looks interesting and that she can build up a relationship with.

When Caroline Szyber found out that she could get elected to Swedish parliament for the Christian party she started following people that she earlier have had an interesting conversation in 'real' life. Besides these persons she also follows friends but these are more seldom Tweeters.

When you start following does the avatar matter?

According to Person X and Annika Beijbom it does not matter which profile picture the Tweeter has, what matter more is what type of information the user has in his bio. Gustaf Stenlund looks more to the communication and exchange, and then he starts following him. While others like Dag König and Caroline Szyber reacts if the user has the default Twitter avatar, also known as the Twitter 'egg'. Suzanne Enfors told me that what avatar the users has does not matter but what is in the users bio and if the user follows any other users on Twitter.

Therese Reuterswärd

@TrulyTherese Stockholm

Internet strategist and #GeekGirl. My tweets and blog focus on Social Media and how to succeed with Online Marketing. Tillgänglig för #nyttjobb!

http://TrulyTherese.se

How do you read others Tweets/ What do you look for in other Tweets?

According to Person X he/she and Suzanne Enfors is not interested in reading personal status updates, he/she looks for information exchange with others since he is not on Twitter all the time but usually only one time per day. He/she has a personal list for the people that he finds the most interesting. Dag Königs looks at what type of Tweets he sees in front of him and if it can give him an exchange of information. Gustaf Stenlund looks for interesting Tweets and if it can cause attention. Caroline Szyber finds it funny with journalists that can say what they think without being to personal. Annika Bejibom does not look for anything special in Tweets from other users.

Do you follow links that others Tweets?

Person X, Dag König usually follows links that they see other Tweets. Gustaf Stenlund and Suzanne Enfors usually does not click directly on links, instead it matters for them if there is any information before the link. Caroline Szyber said yes if she can see the opportunity for an interesting information exchange. Annika Bejibom said that if users has direct bit.ly link she does not click on the link but if the user has the full link she usually clicks on it.

Do you follow ready everybody the same?

Person X, Gustaf Stenlund and Dag König can not follow everybody the same because of time issues, instead they see what happens currently when they sit down in front of

Twitter. Caroline Szyber checks when she sits down in front of the computer, but if it is so that she had missed the beginning of an interesting conversation she can go back in the conversation. She also mentioned during the interview that she currently follows to many currently to follow everybody equally. Suzanne Enfors told me that she tries to follow everybody the same and that if she has not been in front of the computer for an hour she sits down and reads through the hour that she have missed. Annika Bejibom tries to read everybody the same but if a she has missed a couple of hours of Tweets she does not try to read them all.

"Now I have a few too many that I follow to have complete control""

Have you stopped following another user?

Person X, Gustaf Stenlund and Dag König has stopped following people that 'spams' their Twitter timeline. Suzanne Enfors told me that she have stopped following another user on Twitter that filled up her timeline with attacks on other users. One example that was mentioned was one of who stopped following a close friend since he spammed his Twitter timeline with advertisement. Gustaf Stenlund does a purge every three to five months clearing out people who are no longer active on Twitter.

6.7 Followers

How often do you start following your followers after communication?

Gustaf Stenlund, Dag König and Person X told me during the interviews that if they see that they have an interesting discussion they start following them .It does not depend weather or not that person has an opinion that differentiates from their own. While other like Caroline Szyber told me that her current combination of Twitter.com and Echofon gives her issues so often when she starts following it does not actually start following the people that she wants it to start following, if these persons has an interesting conversation with her and she wants to see more them then she starts following them.

Suzanne Enfors said that she starts following another person after communication on Twitter. Annika Bejibom usually follows persons that follow her, except for once where a follower only followed her, so she did not follow back.

Do you often use the RT function for your followers?

Caroline Szyber admitted that she often uses the Retweet function to be able to add a comment. According to her the downside of actually using Twitter.com is that only the new type of Retweet is available so she has no option of actually adding a comment. When she uses the new type of RT she often follows up with a new Tweet in shape of a

comment. Suzanne Enfors and Annika Bejibom told me that if she sees an interesting Tweet she often uses the RT function.

Person X often uses the RT function on Twitter forward comments from other participants at events. Gustaf Stenlund often uses RT to forward political opinions, both from his side 'Alliansen' and the opposing parties. With the later one he usually uses the old type of RT so that he is able to add a comment on how he looks at the situation. Dag König does not often use the RT function but when uses it is the 'new' version
With my survey I asked the question if the Retweet function was actively used on Twitter, this was confirmed by that 90,8 % said that they use the Retweet function while 11,8 % percent said that they do not use it.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	90,8 %	69
No	11,8 %	9
answered question	76	76
skipped question	2	2

This was followed by the question which type of Retweet do you prefer? With or without comment? 71,2 said that they prefered Retweet with comment, 8,2 % said that they do not know which one they like and 27,4 % prefers the Retweet function without comment.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
With comment	71,2 %	52
Do not know	8,2 %	6
Without comment	27,4 %	20
answered question	73	73
skipped question	5	5

6.8 Services

Do you often use services such as TwitPic or Plixi to Tweet with pictures or video?

Person X	No
Dag König	Yes
Caroline Szyber	No, but she wishes that she did it more
Gustaf Stenlund	Yes, did it more with his former work for the Moderate Youth party.
Annika Bejibom	TwitPic
Suzanne Enfors	Previously TwitPic, now Instagram.

Do you use localization services on Twitter?

Dag König	No – believes strongly in personal integrity
Person X	Not excited about localisation services and it will take a long time before he starts using them.
Gustaf Stenlund	Did not know about this service during the interview and after explanation he will not start using them.
Caroline Szyber	Twitter.com – No/ Echofon – Yes.
Suzanne Enfors	No but has Twitter connected to Foursquare/Gowalla
Annika Bejibom	No does not want everybody to see where she is.

A localization feature can be recognized that you can see "Tweeted via " followed by the location that you are Tweeting from. currently In my 24,4 percent said that they are currently using localization services and 79,5 % said that they are not using localization features at the moment.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	24,4 %	19
No	79,5 %	62
answered question	78	78
skipped question	0	0

If yes have you locked your account so that everybody can see your position?

During my interview with Caroline Szyber she told me that if you lock something you end up locking everything. The survey that I did for Twitter users included the question "Have you considered locking your account?" 24,4 percent said yes and 84,4 said that they have not considered locking their account. If a user said no I had a follow up question that was "If no then why?" where answers ranged from if the user said that it defeated the purpose of Twitter to that they have nothing to hide.

"If you lock something you end up locking everything"

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	24,4 %	11
No	84,4 %	38
answered question	45	45
skipped question	33	33
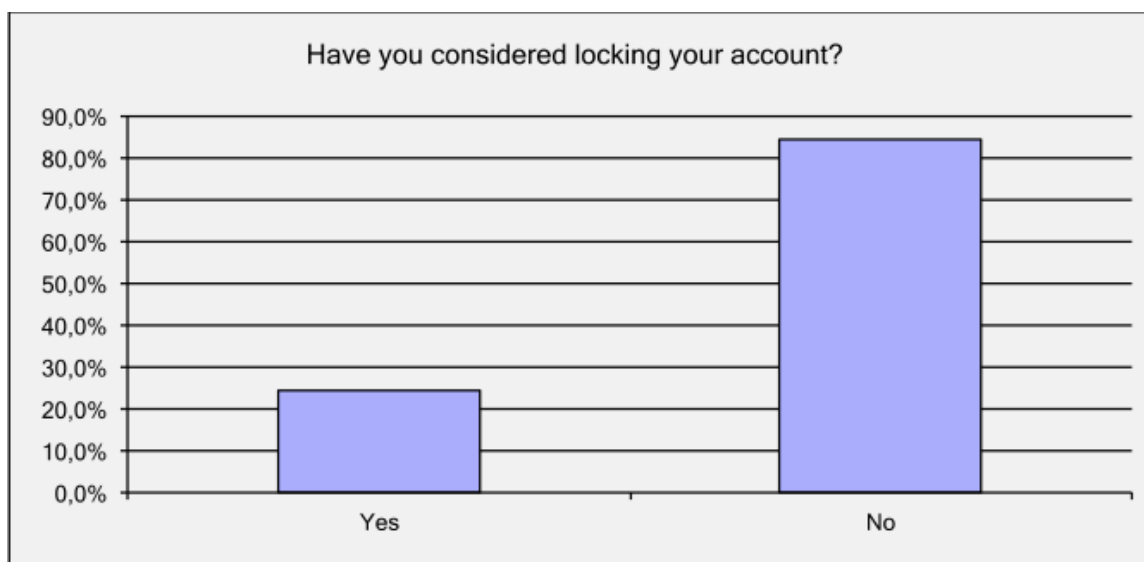
Do you use services such as Twitter to forward messages from your blog/Facebook page?

Person X uses the function in TweetDeck to able to post in Facebook/Linkedin. Gustaf Stenlund used to have them connected but have disconnected them so that he is able different type of communication on Twitter and Facebook. Suzanne Enfors said that she prefers to have them separate since she does not want to spam her friends with Tweets.

During her campaign Caroline Szyber used to have Facebook and Twitter linked together, but she does not have it any longer since she wants to have different types of communication. While others like Dag König uses Twitter to be able to forward messages/information about the podcasts he is participating in . Annika Beijbom does not connect Twitter to other services, but wants to do this.

6.9 Privacy

How personal/private are you on Twitter?

Dag König and Person X does not Tweet about everything since they do not see the need to share everything. While Caroline Szyber told me during her interview that she sees it as an opportunity to share both parliament life and everyday life, to give the followers a better understanding of whom she is. Gustaf Stenlund and Suzanne Enfors sees himself

as both since he is personal in what he is Tweeting, but he is also private since he does not Tweet about everything about on Twitter. Annika Bejibom sees herself as personal since she does not see the need to share everything on Twitter.

Do you show your regular name on Twitter or do you use an alias?

Gustaf Stenlund has thought about it, but feels that he has to be able to stand for what he Tweets on Twitter. Dag König his avatar shows him but his Twitter handle references an old Xbox game. While others like Person X , Suzanne Enfors, Annika Bejibom and Caroline Szyber has both their full name and pictures of themselves on Twitter.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Alias	40,3 %	31
No Alias	64,9 %	50
answered question	77	77
skipped question	1	1

With my survey I asked the question if they used an alias or not. 40,3 % percent said that they do not use an alias while 64,9 percent said that they do not use an alias for their Twitter profile.
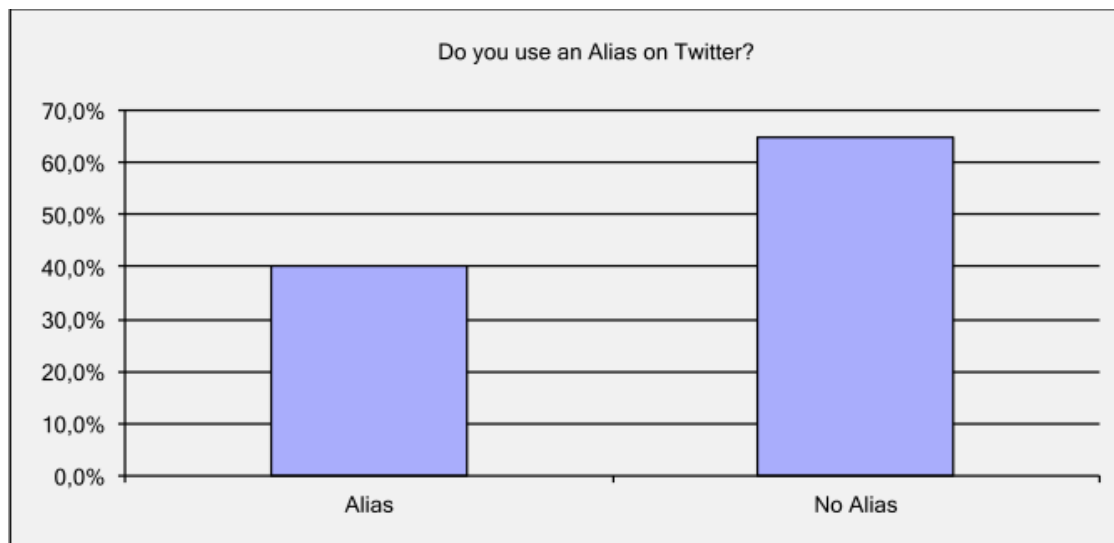
Do you avoid Tweeting with pictures to avoid that it falls into the wrong hand?

During the interviews they told me that they have not Tweeted avoided Tweeting with a picture but looks more to what they can and can not Tweet.

Do you often use the DM function on Twitter?

Gustaf Stenlund often uses the DM function to his girlfriend and journalists that he wants to communicate with. Annika Beijbom told me that she uses it often. Person X uses it rarely and focus more on the open aspect of Twitter. Caroline Szyber uses it to get in contact with journalists. Dag König uses the internal IM system at Microsoft instead. Suzanne Enfors does not use this function.

6.10 Professional Role

Do you tweet as an individual or for the company that you are hired by?

A general response was that the interviewee Tweets both in his or hers role for the work that she is currently doing but also Tweets as an individual. What was interesting about this was that Person X told me that even when he Tweets as an individual it can be mistaken that he Tweets for the company that he is currently working for. Annika Bejibom told me that she Tweets as individual but that she has has contact with other companies over Twitter.

Does your company tell you what you can Tweet about?

Before the election they finalized a list on what you can do and cannot do on social networks, but Caroline Szyber used her own which according to her worked better. According to her you have to be aware that what is Tweeted about you always leave a trace. Annika Beijbom told me that she often can not talk about everything on Twitter since writers often wants to hold things secret.

Caroline Szyber, Person X, Dag König and Gustaf Stenlund more Tweets with common sense.

Do you have any morale obligations on what you can and cannot Tweet about?

Everyone told me, during his or her interviews, that there is information that you can and can not Tweet about, i.e. a boring meeting then it may be ok to share the information.

Do you run this account in your spare time also?

During the interviews they told me that they run their account in their spare time also since they see it as something fun to do.

6.11 Usage

The interviewees had different reasons into why they registered for Twitter but what they had in common was that they wanted to interact with others. Why they interacted with others varied from communicating with voters to interacting with podcast listeners.

A question that I asked during these interviews was "Do they answer a person with an avataer faster then a person with an avatar?". Caroline Szyber and Annika Bejibom told me that they try to be quick to answer a person regardless of what avatar the user has. Others like Gustaf Stenlund told me during the interview that if he sees a familiar name he would be faster to respond.

In my survey I asked the same question if they answer a person with an avatar faster then a person without an avatar. 40.3 % said that they answer a person while 44.3 % said that it does not matter if a person has an avatar or not and 18.2 % that answered the survey siad that they do not know if they would be faster to answer a person with an avatar faster then a person without an avatar.

The following table is meant to give an insight into when the interviewees Tweets are active during the day:

What time during the day do you Tweet the most?	Time of the day
Gustaf Stenlund	Morning
Person X	Active during the events
Dag König	Share podcasts during his spare time
Caroline Szyber	Days and weekends
Annika Beijbom	Monday - Friday (time during the day varies since she runs her own company)
Suzanne Enfors	Morning and Evening (but if she has time she sits down to look through Twitter)

"Twitter is like an oracle, you can ask questions and get quick responses"

During these interviews I asked what advantages and disadvantages they see from this communication on Twitter.Caroline Szyber empahazised communication with voters in a way that has not been seen before. She ca share more then politics she can also hsare her

personal life with others so that they can see her how she is when she is not in the political spotlight. Gustaf Stenlund said that he can interact with colleagues and journalist on Twitter to see give and get quick updates. Other like Annika Beijbom said that a conversation can evolve quickly if another user has push notifications installed.

6.12 Writing

During these interviews I asked "Has your communication changed since you started to Tweet?" Dag König first registered with Twitter four years ago when first heard about the service but he did not actively use the service until two years later when he noticed that others used the service more actively. Caroline Szyber said that she is quicker to answer people who Tweets to her now then when she started Tweeting. Annika Beijbom said that when she started to Tweet she usually did not have another Twitterers username in a Tweet but today it is not often she does not have another user's username in her Tweets. Others like Gustaf Stenlund said that he did not if there was a "social code" on Twitter when first started using Twitter and that you could go ahead and Tweet just anybody. Today he knows how to conduct communication on Twitter and how it is built up.

When asked about what language each person Tweets at a common line was both Swedish and English, except for Person X and Annika Bejibom. The later one Tweeting in Swedish, French, English and Dutch and Person X Tweeting primarily in Swedish.

During these interviews each interviewee was asked what do they Tweet and not Tweet about. A common line was that they Tweet about their job but others like Suzanne Enfors Tweets about everything that happens in her life.

"I do not Tweet about anything that I can not stand for"

A common response on what is not Tweeted about was that they do not Tweet about personal items since they do not feel that is something others should not know about and they do not Tweet about something they can not stand for, which in the interview was compared to something that is not possible to stand for in their personal life.

6.13 Following

A question in which the responses varied was what makes you follow the ones that you follow? For people like Person X it is often individidiuals that he knows personally, knows what competence they have, individuals that have tipped hime about something good and American personalities that can give him personal insight, while others like Annika Beijbom said that she follows everyone that follows her. As a follow up question I asked "When you start following does the avatar matter?" The responses varied from more looking at what the user has in their bio to looking at the information exchange with the user. A follow up question for this have you stopped following another user? A general response was that they have stopped following another user if they have spammed up their timeline, except for Suzanne Enfors who has stopped following another user because he had too much Tweets that was full of hate.

"Now I have a few too many that I follow to have complete control""

When asking what they look for in others user Tweets the responses varied but what they had in common was they looked for information exchange with others. A follow up question for this was if the interviewee followed everyone the same on Twitter, a common line was that they follow when they sit down in front of the computer. Except for Suzanne Enfors who looks back on Twitter and check what has she missed if something has happened when she was not in front of the computer.

When asked about if you click on links that other Tweet a common response was that they do not click on the link if there is no information before the link. An ideal Tweet with a link should be a bit.ly link with an text explanation before to give the users information on what the link links to.

6.14 Followers

On the question "How often do you start following your followers after communication?" the general response was if they have had an interesting discussion with that person they usually starts following. Annika Beijbom said that she usually starts to follow other persons when they follow her.

During the interviewees I asked if they often used the Retweet function in front for your followers. The general consensus among the interviewees was that they use the Retweet function. Caroline Szyber uses Twitter.com and said that the downside with it is that it only supports Retweet without comment so that if you Retweet you have to follow up with another Tweet to comment.

With my survey I asked the question if the Retweet function was actively used on Twitter, this was confirmed by that 90,8 % said that they use the Retweet function while 11,8 % percent said that they do not use it. This was follwed up by another question asking what type of Retweet users prefer where 71,2 % said that they prefer Retweet with comment, 8,2 % said that they do not know which one they prefer and 27,4 % said that they prefer Retweet without comment.

6.15 Services

During these interviews I asked each interviewee if they haved used a third party services such as TwitPic or Plixi to Tweet with pictures or video. All except for one of the interviewees used third party services. I followed this with a question about localisation services and if they used these services. Four out of six interviewees said that they do not use these services since they do not believe that others should see where they are. The other two used localization features while on the with Echofon and the other one used Twitter in conjunction with Foursquare/Gowalla. In my survey 24,4 percent said that they are currently using localization services and 79,5 % said that they are not using localization features at the moment.

This was followed up with a question about if you use the localization features have you

considered locking your account? Caroline Szyber told me that if you lock something you end up locking everything and the others said that it defeats the purpose of Twitter. I asked the same question in my survey where, 24, 4 percent said yes and 84, 4 said that they have not considered locking their account. If a user said no I had a follow up question that was "If no then why?" where answers ranged from if the user said that it defeated the purpose of Twitter to that they have nothing to hide. This was followed by "Have you used services on Twitter to forward messages to blogs/Facebook?". A general consensus was that everyone did not connect Twitter other services such as Facebook since they want separate types of communications.

6.16 Privacy

On the question how personal/ private are you on Twitter, four out of the six interviewees told me that they are personal since they do not feel the need to share everything on Twitter. While Caroline Szyber said that she is also personal since she also shares how she is outside the politics. As a follow up question I asked "Do you show your full name on Twitter?" Five out of the six interviewees said that they show their full name on Twitter, while others like Dag König has an avatar that shows him but his handle references an old XBOX game. With my survey I asked the question if they used an alias or not. 40,3 % percent said that they do not use an alias while 64,9 percent said that they do not use an alias for their Twitter profile.This was followed by " Do you avoid Tweeting with pictures to avoid that it falls into the wrong hand?" The general consensus was that they have not avoided Tweeting with pictures but they think more of what they can and can not Tweet. "Do you often use the DM function on Twitter?" Four out of the six interviewees said that they do not use DM function on Twitter. Caroline Szyber and Gustaf Stenlund use it to get in contact with journalists about new

6.17 Professional Role

"Do you Tweet as an individual or for the company that you are hired by?" a general response was that they Tweet both as individual and for the company that they work, except for Person X whom primarily Tweets as an individual but it can be mistaken that he Tweets for the company he works for. On the question "Do you have any moral obligations on what you can Tweet and not Tweet about?" During the interviews each interviewee told me that there is information that you can and can not Tweet about. This was followed during the interview(s) by "Do you run the account in your spare time to?" Everyone told me that they run the account in their spare time also since they see it as something fun to do. This was followed by "Does your company tell you what you can Tweet about?" No one tells them what they can Tweeet about but their is information that they can not Tweet about.

'6.18 Techniques

This chapter is set to introduce the techniques that the interviewees use to Tweet and if they correlate with the surveys respondents.

Name of the respondent	Desktop Twitter client	Mobile Twitter client
Suzanne Enfors	Tweetie for Mac	Twitter for iPhone/Twitter for iPad/Flipboard for iOS
Dag König	MetroTwit, Seesmic Desktop, TweetDeck	Panoramic MoTweets, Twitter for Windows Phone
Person X	TweetDeck	Twitter for Windws Phone
Caroline Szyber	Twitter.com	Echofon, TweetS60
Gustaf Stenlund	TweetDeck	TweetDeck for iPhone
Annika Beijbom	Twitter.com	Twitterific for iPhone

The clients listed above are the ones that the people responding to my survey are currently using and from these the favorites are TweetDeck at 26 % , Twitter.com on 28 % and other clients have 27 % (To be a part of this table a Twitter client needed to have more then three votes).
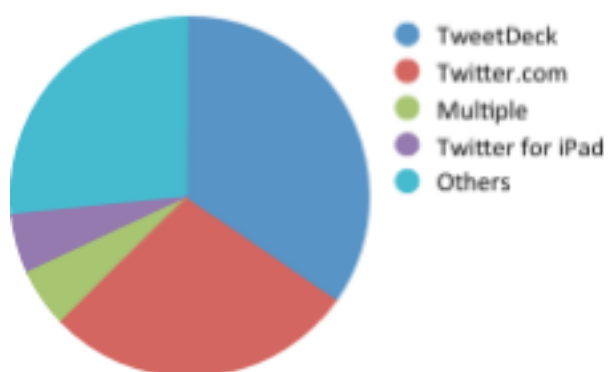
7.0 Discussion

I have in my study been able to gather a wide spectrum of data from Swedish Twitter users, that are active in interacting with others in booth tweeting and following with others. A reason that people are Tweeting could be that Swedes are not afraid of Tweeting in more languages. Furthermore a reason why people are using Twitter could be that the interaction they get on Twitter is not available on other platforms, e.g. the mobile applications that are available offers different ways of experiencing Twitter. Ebner et al, (2007) is probably right in that people with the help of mobile applications and comments are done from everywhere. The quotes in this thesis has been translated from Swedish to English.

The data has been collected through six interviews and a survey conducted on Surveymonkey . Out of the six interviews, all six were supposed to be recorded but only five were recorded. I was not able to listen to the sixth one unfortunately since the file was corrupted. Another reflection that is important to consider is in my role in the situation, since I actively use Twitter that could be seen as an effecting factor. Al though since the data collection has been done through interviews and a survey my affect is non-existent. Otherwise I look at my role as a positive factor since I have good knowledge about Twitter and how it is used. My own experience and insight minimizes the risk for misunderstanding and in the interviews and survey. My survey allowed for dual responses to get a better understanding on users insight on Twitter, e.g. what type of Retweet is the most used since they varies how they are used on Twitter. A Swede interacts on Twitter since he/she sees a possibility of interaction that is not available on other channels such as Facebook or MySpace. A common response on why you started to tweet was that they saw it as a part of their work but that it later evolved to a to being more then work, you see it as an opportunity to share information that you would not normally have.

I can conclude that there is no answer on what a Swede tweets about on Twitter, but there is an answer on what is not tweeted about. Users do not want to share personal items on Twitter since they do not think that is the proper channel. What is important for a Swedish user to follow another user is what is written in their biography on Twitter. If a user decides to unfollow another user there is no real definitive answer, it ranged from that they tweeted hateful messages to that they tweeted so often that the users could not notice the what others tweeted. A Swedish user initially looks at Twitter as a part of their work but as they tweet more they start to see the account as a part of their personal life also.

The two most used Twitter clients among my interviewees and respondents are Twitter.com and TweetDeck. When tweeting, localization services are not used because user does not feel that they want to share where they are when they tweet. User does not want to connect Twitter with Facebook since they want to have two separate lines of communication. The type of communication that is conducted on Twitter is not the same type of communication that is carried out on Facebook. A conclusion that I can draw from my interviews are that users does not use the default third party services that comes with their Twitter clients, instead they use services that they are familiar with e.g. TwitPic or Instagram.

I consider that the respondents both in my interviews and in my survey and my final results are consistent with each other. The respondents talked about how and why they interact, which also is the results of my study '

7.1 What is tweeted?

It is clear that Swedes uses Twitter to interact with others, however there is no clear definition on what is Tweeted except that it is defined by the user what is Tweeted. There is a correlation in that people does not Tweet about personal updates since they feel that this are not what they want to share on Twitter. Furthermore people do not want to share where they are when they Tweet, e.g. using the localization services that Twitter provides since they do not want to broadcast where they are currently and think that this information that not everybody needs to see. User does not connect Twitter to other services, such as Facebook since they want separate feeds of communication on these two services.

What is important to know is that a user on Twitter follows what is happening on Twitter when they are currently in front of the computer. Know what Twitter client users use is important since it allows you to know what services are available to users. From both the respondents of my survey and the interviewees I can draw the conclusion that Twitter.com and TweetDeck are the two most actively used Twitter clients. An important aspect to consider when looking at both of these two clients is that they offer different visual experiences but also offers different services. Twitter only supports the official type of Retweet without comment while TweetDeck supports Retweet both with and withut comment. TweetDeck supports bit.ly automatic link shortening while Twitter does not so you have to go a separate site to shorten the link and then manually add it back onto Twitter.com.
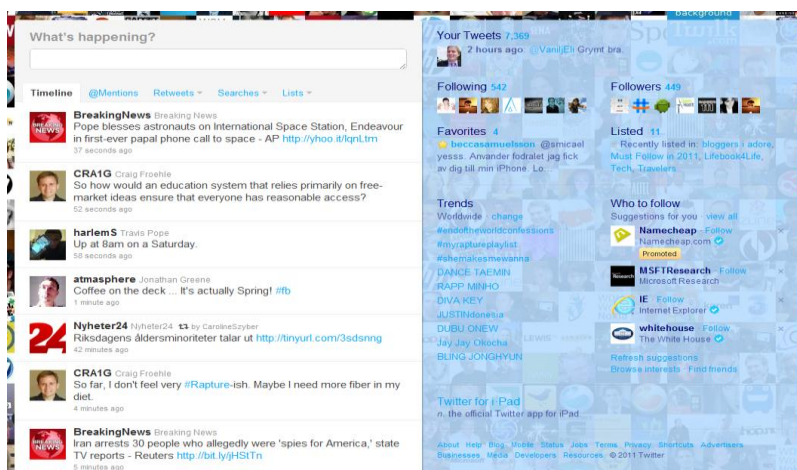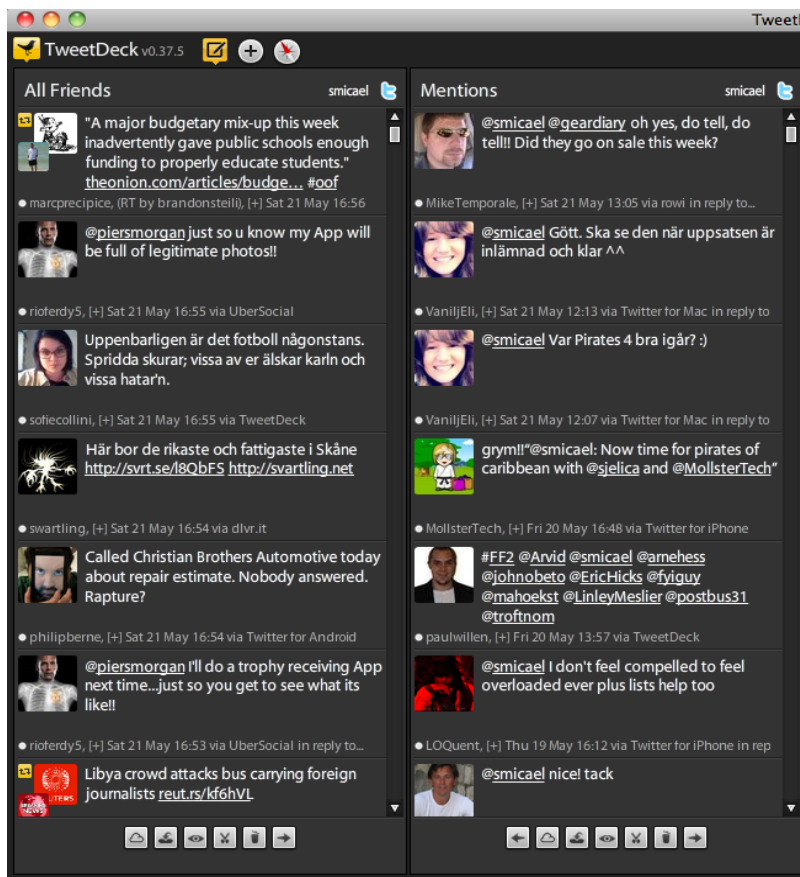
7.2 Why do users follow and unfollow others?

There is no correlation on what makes a user follow another user on Twitter. From the people that I interviewed it is clear to me that this varies from follows all the people with whom they have interacted with to people whom they think can give them insight on what is currently happening. During the interviews I asked the question "When you follow another user does the avatar matter?" What is important for the user when following another user is not what type of avatar the user has, it is what is written in their user bio.

I would make the assumption that if a user follow another user on Twitter is related to another question that I asked, namely are you personal or private on Twitter? Since what style you have on Twitter shows you what type of person you are on Twitter and if you

start following other users on Twitter when they follow you or if you follow users after communication. Annika Bejibom told me the only time she has not followed another person was when that person had a lot of followers but only followed her. I would make the assumption that depending how many a user follow and how many followers a user have gives a different type of representation then the users biography. However there is a connection in what makes a user unfollow another user on Twitter, and the reason is a user a user who posts several times in a row, or as an interviewee described it "spams up their timeline" another reason who was mentioned in an interview was people who attacks other users on Twitter.

7.3 Information Overload

One thing is for certain and that is there is no clear definition on what Information Overload is. On Twitter it could be that a user feels that there is too much information currently in their Timeline and do not know how to cope with it. The benefit with Twitter is that there is a lot of ways a user can deal with Information Overload. Communication tools such as the list function and # hashtags for discussion allows a user to have more channels of information. This gives a user the benefit of having specific channels of information, e.g. based on in interest. A good example on coping with Information Overload is the hashtag #Twitterakuten. If a user feels that they do not know how to cope with the information on Twitter they can ask a question and receive an answer on how to do this here. Furthermore by doing it this way another user can check the #hashtag Twitterakuten and see if the answer fits their question.

7.4 Suggestion for further research

Since my study has had both a quantitative and qualitative approach to find out how a Swedish user on Twitter a good way to continue forward would be to with more interviews and perhaps with more respondents to surveys it would be possible to define what different types of Twitter users there are here in Sweden. By doing it this way we would be able to find out more about more deeper about their habits and interaction o Twitter.

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http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/2184/a/15521
http://www.twitter.com
http://www.surveymonkey.com

Interviews

- · Annika Beijbom
- · Caroline Szyber
- · Dag König
- · Gustaf Stenlund
- · Suzanne Enfors

Interviewees Twitter profiles

http://twitter.com/#!/annikabeijbom
http://twitter.com/#!/carolineszyber
http://twitter.com/#!/buzzfrog
http://twitter.com/#!/gustafstenlund
http://twitter.com/#!/ennazus

8.1 Appendix A – interview questions

Usage

1. When did you start using Twitter?

2. What made you start using Twitter?

3. What time during the day do you Tweet the most?

4. Do you answer a person with an avatar faster then a person without an avatar?

5. What advatanges/disadvantages do you see with Twitter?

6. Do you read in your spare time?

Technique

1. Do you use Twitter.com or?

2. What client do you use on your computer?

3. What client are you using on your smartphone?

Writing

1. Has your communication changed since you started Tweeting?

2. If yes how has it changed?

3. What languages do you Tweet in?

4. What do you Tweet about?

5. What do you not Tweet about?

6. Why do you not Tweet about this?

7. What advatanges/disadvantages do you see with Twitter?

Following

1. If you do not follow all what makes you follow the ones you follow?

2. When you start following does the avatar matter?

3. How do you read others Tweets?

4. What do you look for in others Tweets?

5. Do you follow links that others Tweets?

6. Do you follow everybody equal?

7. If no, what strategy do you have for the ones you follow?

8. Have you stopped following another user?

9. If yes, why?

Followers

1. How often do you start following your followers after communication on Twitter?

2. Do you use Retweet in front of your followers?

3. Do you follow everybodys Tweets that you follow?

4. If no, why?

Services

1. Do you use services such as TwitPic or Plixi to Tweet with pictures or video?

2. Do you use Twitters own localization services?

3. If yes have you locked your account so that everybody can not see your location?

4. If no why do you not use localization services?

5. Have you connected your Twitter account to other services such as Twitterfeed?

6. Have you connected Twitter to other services such as Facebook?

Professional Role

1. Do you Tweet as an individual or for the company that you are hired by?

2. If yes do you handle the companys Twitter account?

3. If no are other people involved in the account?

4. Is there a budget for handling your Twitter account?

5. Does your company tell you what you can Tweet about?

6. If yes, do you have any moral obligations on what you can Tweet about?

7. Do you run this account in your spare time to?

8. Do you Tweet as an individual with this account or do you have a spare account for that?

Privacy

1. How personal/private are you on Twitter?

2. Do you use your real name on Twitter or do you use an alias?

3. Does your avatar show you or something else?

4. Do you avoid Tweeting with pictures so that they do not fall in the wrong hands?

5. Have you considered putting a stamp on specific pictures so that they do not fall in the wrong hands when you Tweet with pictures?

6. Do you use localization services on Twitter to show where you are when Tweeting?

7. If no, why?

8. Have you considered locking your account?

9. If yes, why?

10. If locked do you go through the requests from everybody that wants to follow you?

11. Do you use the DM function on Twitter?

8.2 Survey questions

Follow

1. Do you follow the persons that follow you?

2. What makes you start following other users on Twitter?

Followers

1. Have you stopped following other users on Twitter?

2. If yes, why?

Usage

1. Do you use the Retweet function?

2. Do you prefer the one with or without comment?

3. Do you use Twitters list function?

4. Do you use the DM function on Twitter?

5. Do you answer a person with an avatar faster then a person without an avatar?

6. Do you often use hashtags on Twitter for discussions?

7. If yes, when?

Third-party services

1. Do you use any Third party services on Twitter?

2. Have you connected Twitter with other services?

Privacy

1. How personal/private are you on Twitter?

2. Do you use your real name on Twitter?

3. Do you use localization services on Twitter?

4. If yes, have you considered locking your account?

5. If no, why?

Technique

1. What Twitter client do you use?

Other questions

1. Is there anything you wish to add?