

# Who Watches (and Shares) What on YouTube? And When? Using Twitter to Understand YouTube Viewership

Adiya Abisheva  
ETH Zürich  
aabisheva@ethz.ch

Venkata Rama Kiran  
Garimella  
Qatar Computing  
Research Institute  
gvrkirann@gmail.com

David Garcia  
ETH Zürich  
dgarcia@ethz.ch

Ingmar Weber  
Qatar Computing  
Research Institute  
iweber@qf.org.qa

## ABSTRACT

By combining multiple social media datasets, it is possible to gain insight into each dataset that goes beyond what could be obtained with either individually. In this paper we combine user-centric data from Twitter with video-centric data from YouTube to build a rich picture of who watches and shares what on YouTube. We study 87K Twitter users, 5.6 million YouTube videos and 15 million video sharing events from user-, video- and sharing-event-centric perspectives. We show that features of Twitter users correlate with YouTube features and sharing-related features. For example, urban users are quicker to share than rural users. We find a superlinear relationship between initial Twitter shares and the final amounts of views. We discover that Twitter activity metrics play more role in video popularity than mere amount of followers. We also reveal the existence of correlated behavior concerning the time between video creation and sharing within certain timescales, showing the time onset for a coherent response, and the time limit after which collective responses are extremely unlikely. Response times depend on the category of the video, suggesting Twitter video sharing is highly dependent on the video content. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first large-scale study combining YouTube and Twitter data, and it reveals novel, detailed insights into who watches (and shares) what on YouTube, and when.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

On July 11, 2013, @justinbieber tweeted: “so many activities it is making my head spin! haha <http://t.co/Gdg615ZZGX>”, sharing a link to a short YouTube movie clip. In one day, the video received more than 100,000 views, and its owner commented: “So I checked my email today to find 500 new mail... WTF I thought... 5 mins later I discover that Justin Bieber has tweeted this video...”. The viewers of that video came from the 40 million followers that Justin Bieber has in Twitter, including large amounts of pop-loving teenagers that retweeted the video link more than 800 times in the following days.

The above example illustrates how the combination of Twitter and YouTube data provide insights on *who watches what on YouTube*

Permission to make digital or hard copies of all or part of this work for personal or classroom use is granted without fee provided that copies are not made or distributed for profit or commercial advantage and that copies bear this notice and the full citation on the first page. Copyrights for components of this work owned by others than the author(s) must be honored. Abstracting with credit is permitted. To copy otherwise, or republish, to post on servers or to redistribute to lists, requires prior specific permission and/or a fee. Request permissions from [permissions@acm.org](mailto:permissions@acm.org).  
WSDM '14, February 24–28, 2014, New York, New York, USA.  
Copyright is held by the owner/author(s). Publication rights licensed to ACM.  
ACM 978-1-4503-2351-2/14/02 ...\$15.00.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2556195.2566588>.

*and when*. In this article we combine large datasets from both on-line communities, aiming at a descriptive analysis of the demographics and behavioral features of YouTube viewership through Twitter video shares. In our analysis, the “*who*” refers to the identity of Twitter users, as displayed on their public profile. We quantify this identity in three facets: a) demographic variables such as gender and location, b) social metrics that include reputation and impact metrics in the Twitter follower network, and c) personal interests and political alignment inferred from profile descriptions and followed accounts. The “*what*” refers to features of the videos, including i) the YouTube category, and ii) the popularity of videos in terms of views or likes. The “*when*” is the time lapsed between the creation of a video and its sharing in Twitter, measuring the time component of individual and collective reaction patterns to YouTube videos.

With a combined dataset of Twitter data and YouTube videos we can answer questions about the interaction between both communities. First, we explore the purpose of social sharing, distinguishing regular and promotional Twitter accounts linked to a particular YouTube channel. We then analyze to which extent the content of the videos watched by a user is similar to their interests on Twitter. Using features extracted from Twitter, we are able to quantify factors such as social sharing and influence and infer their effect on the videos consumed on YouTube. We also look at the role of political alignment in YouTube video sharing, comparing the shared topics and reaction patterns of individuals depending on their political activity on Twitter.

We analyze the times between video creation and social sharing, looking for factors that mediate the speed of video sharing. We find the demographics of users that share videos earlier than the rest, and compare how different categories elicit faster or slower reactions in Twitter. Finally, we explore the relation between the early Twitter shares of a video and its final popularity. To do so, we designed a model that includes social impact and reputation metrics of the early watchers of the video, providing early forecasts of a video’s ultimate popularity.

## 2. RELATED WORK

Since we answer “*who?*”, “*what?*” and “*when?*”, we describe related work done on Twitter profiles and online demographics, YouTube viewership and content and temporal behaviour patterns.

### 2.1 Online Demographics

Related work on “*who*” *does* “*what*” in Web search has been done in Weber and Jaimes [38] where authors analyze query logs of 2.3 million users from a web search US engine. Even though our

work performs analysis on Twitter and YouTube users rather than Web search users, methodology used in previous study is of high relevance for our research. More closely related work on Twitter demographics was performed in Mislove et al. [26] where authors investigate whether Twitter users are a representative sample of society. By using (optionally) self-reported and publicly visible data of Twitter users, authors compared demographics of Twitter US users to the US population along three axes. On the geographical dimension, findings showed that Twitter users are overrepresented in highly populated US counties and underrepresented in sparsely populated regions due to different patterns of adoption of social media across regions. Across gender, the male Twitter population is greater than female especially among early Twitter adopters, but male bias decreases as Twitter evolves. On race/ethnicity authors show the distribution is highly geographically-dependent. Another study on demographics by Goel et al. [16] shows that user demographics (age, gender, race, income etc.) can be inferred from Web browsing histories. Finally, Kulshrestha et al. [22] investigate the role of offline geography in Twitter and conclude that it has a significant role in social interactions on Twitter with more tweets and links exchanged across national boundaries.

## 2.2 Research on Twitter Data

Apart from demographics, Twitter has also been studied from other perspectives: prediction of trends/hashtags [2, 34, 19]; notions of influence in Twitter [6] and using Twitter predictive data for elections and discovering political alignment of users [8, 9]. Asur et al. [2] studied trending topics/hashtags and discovered that the content of a tweet and retweeting activity rather than user attributes such as influence, number of followers and frequency of posting are the main drivers for spotting the trend and keeping it alive. In Wang and Huberman [34] a model for attention growth and persistence of trends is presented and is validated on trending topics in Twitter. In another work on trending topics, hashtags in Twitter can be clustered according to the temporal usage patterns of the hashtag: before, during and after peak of its popularity. Furthermore, the class of the hashtag correlates with social semantics of content associated with the hashtag (Lehmann et al. [24]). In a study on differences of search activity of trending topics in the Web and Twitter, Kairam et al. [19] reveal that information-seeking and information-sharing activity around trending events follows similar temporal dynamics, but social media leads Web search activity by 4.3 hours on average. More generalized study on differences between Web and Twitter search by Teevan et al. [32] found that timely and social information are primary drivers for searching on Twitter, compared to more navigational search on the Web; Twitter search is more used to monitor new content, while search on the Web is performed for developing and learning about a topic. Another perspective is the notion of influence in Twitter using followers, retweets and mentions studied by Cha et al. [6] with main finding that having a lot of followers does not necessarily mean having a high influence. Another line of work uses Twitter to monitor political opinions, increase political mobilization, and possibly predict elections' results. Conover et al. [9] present several methods to discover political alignment of Twitter users by analysing the network of political retweets and hashtags usage. In subsequent work [8], authors go beyond discovering political groups in Twitter, and analyse interaction dynamics of politically aligned subcommunities. Their findings show that right-leaning Twitter users produce more political content, spend a greater proportion of their time for political conversation and have more tightly interconnected social structure which leverages broad and fast spread of information.

## 2.3 YouTube Video Consumption

Ulges et al. [33] use YouTube concepts to predict demographic profile of viewers and also try to use demographics estimated from views statistics to predict the concepts of a video. They show that the use of demographic features improves the quality of prediction. Concerning YouTube video views, researchers have analyzed time series [11], and predicted the final views count based on properties of growth on YouTube [31]. For instance, Crane and Sornette [11] perform analysis of collective responses to YouTube videos through their time series of views. Among the classes, the most usual were videos that have a fast decaying amount of views, receiving negligible amounts of views soon after their creation. Laine et al. [23] highlighted the role of exogenous factors (such as interest groups) in the activity of YouTube viewers and Qiu et al. [29] suggested two different mechanisms that drive YouTube viewership: popularity and quality filtering. On popularity of videos in YouTube, Figueiredo et al. [12] found copyright videos gain 90% of their views early in lifetime compared to top listed YouTube or randomly chosen videos; top listed videos show *quality* popularity dynamics pattern opposed to copyright and random videos exhibiting *viral*, word-of-mouth, dynamics. And finally, related videos and internal search are most contributing towards content dissemination, but for random videos social link is also a key factor. On politics in YouTube, recent work by Garcia et al. [14] performs analysis of collective responses to the YouTube videos of US political campaigns and reveals differences in collective dynamics that suggest stronger interaction among right-leaning users. Weber et al. [36] use YouTube video tags and conclude that general YouTube videos are not polarized in terms of audience, but for subclasses of apolitical videos (e.g., tagged as "army") an audience bias can be predicted (right-leaning in this case). Finally, in Crane et al. [10] collective responses to the videos of Saddam Hussein's death show an extremely fast response and relevance of news and politics for YouTube viewers.

## 2.4 On Human Behaviour

Since our analysis involves the "when" dimension of video shares on Twitter, we review work on temporal patterns in human behaviour. Quantitative understanding of human behavior, also known as human dynamics, got a new turning point in 2005 after work by A.-L. Barabási [3], where author looked whether the timing of human activities follows any specific pattern. Results showed that there are bursts of intensive activity interchanged with long periods of inactivity (Pareto distribution) rather than events happening at regular time intervals (Poisson). Since 2005 more studies on the inhomogeneous nature of temporal processes in human dynamics have been performed [10, 20, 39]. Various proxies were used to get timing of human activity, e.g., mobile records, web server logs, SMS etc. Recent study by Wu et al. [39] suggests time patterns follow bimodal distribution with bursts of activity explained by power-law distribution in the first mode and exponentially distributed initiation of activity in the second mode.

## 3. DATA SET

We collected data from Twitter and YouTube for our analysis, and related the datasets by looking at instances where links to videos were shared on Twitter. This section describes how we obtained the 87K Twitter users, 5.6 million YouTube videos, and 15 million video sharing events we analyzed in greater detail. Data sets are available at [http://web.sg.ethz.ch/users/aabisheva/2013\\_YouTube\\_Twitter\\_ETH\\_QCRI/index.html](http://web.sg.ethz.ch/users/aabisheva/2013_YouTube_Twitter_ETH_QCRI/index.html).

### 3.1 Twitter

The data acquisition starts with a 28 hour time slice from 6/6/2013 21:00 to 8/6/2013 1:00 (AST) of all public Tweets containing any URL provided by GNIP, a reseller of Twitter data. Of these tweets, only tweets by users with at least one follower, one friend, has non-empty profile location and English as profile language were considered. 1,271,274 tweets containing a URL from `http://www.youtube.com` or `http://youtu.be` where identified. URLs shortened by Twitter’s default URL shortener `t.co` were automatically unshortened, but other services were not considered. From this set, 200K distinct tweets were sampled uniformly at random. These tweets account for 177,791 distinct users. Out of these, 100K users were sampled uniformly at random.

For each of these users we obtained (up to) their last 3,200 public tweets. In 12,922 cases this failed because the user account had been removed or made private. Along with the tweets, we obtained the user’s public profile, containing the user-defined location, their followers and friends count and the set of (up to) 5,000 friends (= other Twitter users the user follows) and 5,000 followers (= other Twitter users who follow this user). 96.8% of our users had less than 5,000 followers and 98.9% had less than 5,000 friends. We also got the profile information for all these friends and followers. Finally, we had 17,013,356 unique tweets with 5,682,627 distinct YouTube video IDs, 19,004,341 friends and 22,182,881 followers for the 87,076 users. From this data we extracted a number of features related to (i) demographics, (ii) location, (iii) interests, and (iv) behavior on Twitter.

**Demographics.** We used a name dictionary to infer the self-declared gender of a Twitter user using common first names and gender from `http://www.ssa.gov/oact/babynames/limits.html`. To detect a subset of potential parents, we scanned each user’s “bio” for mother/mom/wife or father/dad/husband using exact token match. Similarly, we identified a subset of potential students by scanning the bios for student/study/studying.

**Location.** Each of the users profile locations was run through Yahoo!’s Placemaker geo-coder, `http://developer.yahoo.com/yql/console/`, and for 61,250 profiles, a location could be identified. For the 23,416 users with an identified location in the US we checked if their city matched a list of the 100 biggest US cities from `http://www.city-data.com/top1.html`. This gave us an estimate of users from rural vs. urban areas.

**Interests.** To detect interests of users, we chose to analyze the users they follow. These friends were then compared against directory information from `http://wefollow.com`<sup>1</sup>. Concretely, we obtained information for the classes Sports, Movies, News & Politics, Finance, Comedy, Science, Non-profits, Film, Sci-Fi/Fantasy, Gaming, People, Travel, Autos, Music, Entertainment, Education, Howto, Pets, and Shows as described in Table 1. In addition to the information from `wefollow.com`, we labeled 32 politicians or party accounts on Twitter as either Democrats (13) or Republicans (19). The same list was also used by Weber, et al. [35, 37]. Users were then labeled as left or right according to the distribution of users they followed (if any). Following had previously been shown to be a strong signal for political orientation [7, 4, 35, 37].

**Behavior.** To quantify the activity of a user on Twitter, we extracted various features such as their number of tweets, the fraction of tweets that are retweets, or the fraction of tweets containing URLs.

Category	wefollow.com Interests
Sports	sports, baseb., basketb., soccer, footb., cricket, nfl
Movies	movies
News & Politics	economics, politics, news
Finance	banking, investing, finance, entrepreneur, business
Comedy	comedy, comedian
Science & Technology	tech, technology, gadgets, science, socialmedia
Non-profits & Activism	non-profits, non-profit, charity, philanthropy
Film & Animation	film, animation, cartoons
Sci-Fi/Fantasy	scifi, sciencefiction, fantasy
Gaming	games, gaming
People & Blogs	blogger, blogs, people, celebrity
Travel & Events	travel, places
Autos & Vehicles	automotive, autos, cars, vehicles
Music	music, dance, dancier
Entertainment	entertainment
Education	academic, university, education
Howto & Style	howto, diy, doityourself
Pets & Animals	animals, cats, dogs, pets
Shows	tv, tvshows, media

**Table 1: Mapping of YouTube categories (left) to wefollow.com interests (right). The YouTube category “Trailers” was not mapped. The non-YouTube category “Finance” was added.**

Finally, we also aggregated features from all YouTube videos shared by a user into statistics such as the average view count or the median inter-event time (“lag”) between video upload and sharing. These features are described in more detail in the next section.

### 3.2 YouTube Activity on Twitter

Given 17,013,356 unique tweets with YouTube video IDs, we retrieved 15,211,132 sharing events and identified 6,433,570 unique YouTube video IDs. We define sharing event as a tweet containing valid YouTube video ID (having category, Freebase topics and timestamp), thus a tweet with two video IDs is considered as two sharing events. A fraction of videos in initial 17 million tweets were not valid, thus such tweets and consequently derived sharing events were removed. Using the YouTube API, the following data about videos was crawled within the period 7/7/2013 – 1/8/2013: title, uploader username, number of views, number of times video has been marked as favorite, number of raters, number of likes and dislikes, number of comments, video uploaded time and categories to which videos belong. Using the Freebase API we also crawled video topics which serve as deprecated video tags and are helpful for searching content on YouTube, e.g., “hobby”, “music”, “book” and many others are examples of Freebase topics (`http://www.freebase.com/`).

The cleansing stage of data contained three parts: identify noise in data, introduce a filter on Twitter users with “extreme” behaviour and introduce a filter on “legacy” YouTube videos (see Section 5). In our data set, noisy data (0.53%) are those sharing events where the tweet’s timestamp is earlier than the video’s upload timestamp. Such negative lags spanned from 1 second up to a couple of years. We removed all such sharing events which seemed to occur 1) due to updated timestamp of streamed live videos recorded by YouTube where the time at the end of streaming is returned as published timestamp by YouTube API, and 2) due to altered timestamp of reuploaded videos by some YouTube “privileged” accounts. After removing noise, the data reduced to 15,130,439 sharing events, 5,669,907 unique video IDs and 87,069 user IDs.

Handling the data, we came across “non-human” behaviour explained by automated video sharing. We identify Twitter accounts and YouTube channels possibly owned by the same user, and label such Twitter users, as *promotional* since the primary content of such videos is advertisement. These accounts are often in top 1 percentile of Twitter users sorted by the number of YouTube videos

<sup>1</sup>WeFollow is a website listing Twitter users for different topics along with a “prominence score”, indicating importance of the user in the respective field. WeFollow’s directory has been used in several academic studies [25, 5, 1, 27]

shared. Examples of such Twitter-YouTube pairs with the number of shared videos in brackets are: *spanish\_life – aspanishlife* (8,119) on real estate advertisement and *RealHollywoodTr – bootcampmc* (5,315) blogging on fitness and health, while the mean number of shares per user was found at 174 video shares. To remove *promotional* users, we applied a filtering mechanism based on a) similarity between usernames in Twitter and YouTube using longest common substring (LCS), and/or b) amount of videos in Twitter account coming from one YouTube source; for details refer to supplementary material submitted in: <http://arxiv.org/abs/1312.4511>. We follow an aggressive approach when detecting promotional users; thus, there is a possibility of some regular users being labeled as promotional but not the other way round. As a result of filtering we split Twitter accounts into 71,920 regular non-promotional and 15,149 promotional accounts.

## 4. WHO WATCHES WHAT?

In this section, we present a first analysis of who (in terms of Twitter user features) watches and shares what (in terms of YouTube video features). Though we include here user features related to the inter-event time, early video sharers are analyzed in Section 5.

### 4.1 Cluster Analysis

As a first picture of who watches and shares what we present a cluster analysis of 26,938 non-promotional, sufficiently active users who shared at least 10 YouTube videos and had at least 10 friends matched on Twitter through WeFollow (see Table 1). These users were clustered into eight groups according to the (normalized) distribution of YouTube categories of the videos they shared using an agglomerative hierarchical clustering algorithm with a cosine similarity metric [21]. Table 2 shows the results.

We were interested to see which differences for Twitter features are induced when users are grouped solely according to YouTube categories. To describe the clusters found, Table 2 first lists the *discriminative* YouTube features as output by the clustering algorithm. Below it lists the 5 most prominent terms from the Twitter bios of users in this group. These terms, which were *not* used to obtain the clustering, give fairly intuitive descriptions of the user groups. Finally, the table lists features whose average value differs statistically significantly (at 1%) between the cluster and all 27K users. These features are ranked by the absolute difference between global and within-cluster averages, divided by the standard deviation.

Inspecting the clusters, certain observations can be made. First, the discriminating YouTube categories (first block of five lines) are largely aligned with Twitter categories that are over-represented in the corresponding cluster (The “T \*” in the bottom block of five lines). This alignment we will investigate more in Section 4.3. Second, there are certain correlations between the demographics and the YouTube categories. For example, Cluster 1 is focused on sports and has more male users, whereas Cluster 7 is centered around entertainment and people/blogs and has more female users. Recall that the clustering was done according to YouTube categories, whereas the demographic information comes from Twitter, indicating the possible benefits of the combination. Finally, the clustering also picks up a connection to political orientation. Concretely, Cluster 5 contains more conservative users with an increased interest in news and politics (more on this in Section 4.3).

### 4.2 Demographics

To understand the significance of the influence of variables such as gender or occupation on (i) the number of views, (ii) the polar-

ization or controversiality<sup>2</sup>, and (iii) the lag we applied a so-called “permutation test” [17], which unlike other tests does not make assumptions on the distribution type of the observed variables. To test, say, the impact of stating “student” in the Twitter bio on the number of views we first computed the average view count for all views by the “student” group and compared this with the average for the complement “non-student” group. Let  $\delta$  be the observed difference. Then to test the significance of  $\delta$  we pooled all the student and non-student labeled observations and randomly permuted the two labels to get two groups. For these two groups, obtained by a label permutation, a  $\delta_p$  was then computed. This process was repeated 10,000 times to estimate the common level of variability in the  $\delta_p$ . We then marked the  $\delta$  as significant if it was in the bottom/top 0.5% (or 2.5%) of the percentiles of the  $\delta_p$ . In Table 3, a \*\* indicates that  $\delta$  was in the bottom/top 0.5% and \* indicates that it was in the bottom/top 2.5%.

For Table 4 we used a similar procedure to test the statistical significance of the Spearman rank correlation coefficient. Here, to establish the common level of variability we randomly permuted both rankings to be correlated 10,000 times and observed the distribution of the Spearman rank correlation coefficients. If the original, actual coefficient fell within the bottom/top 0.5%/2.5% we marked it as significant.

Table 3 shows correlations with respect to the per-user median (i) number of views of shared videos, (ii) polarization/controversiality of shared videos and (iii) of inter-event times. One of the demographic differences that can be spotted is that men compared to women share less popular (fewer views) videos earlier (smaller lag). Some differences are hidden in this analysis though, as *both* urban *and* rural users seem to have a lower lag (share fast). The explanation for this apparent paradox is that users who have either no self-declared location or where the location is outside of the US have a comparatively larger lag, and that the comparison is with non-urban and non-rural, which mostly consist of these users, see Section 5.1 for more details.

### 4.3 Correlation Analysis

In this section we analyze the relationship between Twitter user features, such as the number of followers or the fraction of tweets that contain a hashtag, and YouTube features, such as the number of views. As a simple analysis tool we computed Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient for each pair of features. To simplify the presentation, we group the Twitter features into four classes. First, to see how “social” a user is we look at (i) the number of friends, and (ii) the number of distinct users mentioned. Second, to see how common “sharing” is for a user we included the fraction of tweets that (i) are retweets, (ii) contain a hashtag, (iii) contain a YouTube URL, and (iv) contain a non-YouTube URL. Finally, we look at notions of “influence” that includes (i) the number of Twitter followers, (ii) the fraction of a user’s tweets that are retweeted, (iii) the average retweet count of tweets that obtained at least one retweet, and (iv) the average number of followers of a user’s followers.

For YouTube we consider the medians of (i) the number of views of videos shared by a user, (ii) the polarization of these videos, and (iii) the time lag of the video sharing events of the user. The

<sup>2</sup>We calculate the polarization that a YouTube video creates on its viewers through its amounts of likes  $L_v$ , dislikes  $D_v$ , and total views  $V_v$ , through the equation  $Pol_v = \frac{L_v}{V_v^{0.849}} \cdot \frac{D_v}{V_v^{0.884}}$ . The rationale behind this calculation is the rescaling of the likes and dislikes ratio based on the fact that they do not grow linearly with each other. The exponents correspond to the base rates of the logarithmically transformed amounts of views, likes and dislikes. This way we standardize the ratio over their nonlinear relation.

	Cluster1 (2740)	Cluster2 (2327)	Cluster3 (2493)	Cluster4 (5390)	Cluster5 (2535)	Cluster6 (4052)	Cluster7 (3697)	Cluster8 (3704)
Discriminating features	sports music entertainment people/blogs non-profit	animals music entertainment people/blogs sports	non-profit music sports entertainment education	music non-profit sports education animals	news/politics music comedy entertainment education	film/animation education music non-profit sports	entertainment people/blogs howto sports music	travel music gaming science/tech autos
Top profile words	fan music sports life football	music life fan lover writer	music life fan world lover	music life artist producer live	music life world conservative people	music life fan lover time	life music fan live justin	music gamer life fan youtube
Top features	T sports+ Y sports+ male+ frac. Tw other URLs+ avg. frnds of frnds-	Y animals+ T animals+ std dev. of lag+ acct created at- T education+	Y non-profit+ T non-profit+ num. usrs rtwd+ frac. of usrs Tw rtwd+ frac. Tw Y videos-	Y music+ median lag+ T music+ mean lag+ Y education-	Y news/politics+ Y comedy+ T news/politics+ frac. Tw other URLs+ leaning republic+	Y film+ Y education+ frac. Tw other URLs- T movies+ Tfilm+	Y howto+ Y people+ Y entertainment+ female+ avg rtwt count user+	Y gaming+ Y science/tech+ T gaming+ Y shows+ num. vids shared+

**Table 2: Clusters obtained by clustering normalized YouTube categories distributions for each user.**

number of comments received by videos shared by a user behaved qualitatively identical to the number of views and is omitted.

Our results are presented in Table 4. Each cell in the table links a Twitter user feature group (row) with a particular YouTube video feature (columns). The three symbols in the cell indicate “+” = significant (at 1% using a permutation test as previously described) and positive, “-” = significant and negative, and “0” = not significant or below 0.05. The symbols are in the order of the features listed above in the text.

Certain general observations can be made. For example, all of our notions of “social” correlate with a drop in lag time, and out of the topics considered, News & Politics is the one that is most consistently linked with users who actively share. But other observations are more complex and, for example, only some but not other notions of influence correlate positively with a large number of views.

We also looked at relation between the Twitter user features and the fraction of video shares for various YouTube categories. Table 4 shows results for the three example categories Music, Sports and News & Politics. Again, different patterns for different definitions of “influence” can be observed. Out of the three topics, News & Politics is the one that correlates most with social and with sharing behavior.

#### 4.4 Interests on Twitter vs. YouTube

Given that our analysis links Twitter behavior to YouTube sharing events it is interesting to understand if the interests on the two platforms are aligned. Though we cannot reason about YouTube views not corresponding to Twitter sharing events, we compared the topical categories of a user’s shared videos with the topical categories of their Twitter friends. To infer the latter, we used the WeFollow data described in Section 3.1 where entries in WeFollow were also weighted according to their prominence score. This way, a user following @espn (prominence 99) is given a higher weight for sports than a user following @hoyarowing (prominence 23). To compare if a user’s YouTube category distribution and Twitter friends WeFollow distributions are similar, we decided *not* to compare these directly due to the following expected bias. The coverage by WeFollow for the different categories is likely to differ.

	male	fe- male	urban	rural	stu- dent	mo- ther	fa- ther	US
views	0	+**	-*	0	0	-*	-*	-*
polariz.	0	-*	0	-*	-*	-*	-**	0
lag	-**	+*	-*	-*	0	+**	-*	-*

**Table 3: Demographics. A + indicates a positive deviation from the general population, - negative and 0 not statistically significant. \*\* indicates that the significance was based on  $\delta$  being in the bottom/top 0.5%, \* for the bottom/top 2.5%.**

For a popular topic such as music, the coverage is potentially over-proportionally good compared to less popular ones. To correct for this, we first normalize as follows.

Let  $c_{ij}^T$  the prominence-weighted fraction of a user  $i$ ’s Twitter friends that are recognized in the WeFollow category  $j$ . Similarly, define  $c_{ij}^Y$  for their shared YouTube category distribution. Now normalize both of these matrices for a fixed category  $j$  such that  $\hat{c}_{ij}^T = c_{ij}^T / \sum_k c_{kj}^T$ . This, effectively, compares users according to their relative interest in a given topic. This is then further normalized to obtain per-user probability distributions via  $\tilde{c}_{ij}^T = \hat{c}_{ij}^T / \sum_k \hat{c}_{ik}^T$ , similarly for  $c_{ij}^Y$ .

Then, for each category  $j$ , we look at the distribution of the differences  $\tilde{c}_{ij}^T - \tilde{c}_{ij}^Y$  across users  $i$ . Categories where this difference is positive indicate a relatively higher importance/preference for Twitter, cases with a negative preference indicate a relatively higher importance for YouTube. Generally, the differences were very small with the median difference not exceeding .04 in absolute value for any category and being smaller than .01 for more than half. Some categories such as Film & Animation were very slightly more prominent on YouTube (indicated by the negative mean and median), whereas Science & Tech was slightly more prominent on Twitter. This analysis was done for active users with at least 10 shared videos and at least 10 friends matched on WeFollow.

#### 4.5 Politics in Twitter and YouTube

To see how *Politics* is introduced in both Twitter and YouTube, we had the following questions in mind: a) which political user groups share more politically charged content, b) what is the most frequent content of each political user group.

As mentioned in Section 3.1, to separate users into political groups we followed a US bipartite system with audience divided into left (L) and right (R) users. Users that followed more of the 13 left seed users were marked as left-leaning, users that followed more of the 19 right seed users were marked as right-leaning and users with a split preference or not following any seed user were marked as apo-

	views	polariz.	lag	Music	Sports	News
Social	--	--	--	+0	0+	++
Sharing	0---	0-0-	----	0-0-	0++0	++++
Influence	--+0	--+0	0--+	+0+0	00+0	++-+

**Table 4: Columns 1-3 show the relation between Twitter and per-user aggregated YouTube features. Columns 4-6 show the relation between Twitter and fractions of categories of YouTube videos shared for three example categories. Twitter features are grouped into three classes. Symbols indicate strength and direction of significance. Bold symbols indicate an absolute value of Spearman’s Rank correlation coefficient > 0.1. See text for details.**

litical. Our approach resulted in three disjoint sets of left users  $U_L$  ( $|U_L| = 11, 217$ ), right  $U_R$  ( $|U_R| = 1, 046$ ) and apolitical users  $U_A$  ( $|U_A| = 57, 672$ ).

We addressed question a) by looking at how much L, R, A users share videos in the category *News & Politics*. If left-leaning user  $u_L$  shared set of videos  $V_L$  with a subset of videos in the category *News & Politics*,  $V_L^{News\&Politics} \in V_L$ ; then we looked at the distribution of ratio of number of political video shares to total amount of shares per each  $u_L$ ,  $u_R$  and  $u_A$ :  $r_{\{u_L, u_R, u_A\}} = \frac{|V_{\{L, R, A\}}^{News\&Politics}|}{|V_{\{L, R, A\}}|}$ . On average mean ratio of videos with political content for each user population is:  $\mu_L = 0.06$ ,  $\mu_R = 0.29$ ,  $\mu_A = 0.05$ , which confirms right users share more news and politics related videos compared to left users and apolitical users.

To answer question b) we calculated topic distributions of videos per each political user category and rank topics in each user group according to their frequency. In order to statistically compare the ranking of topics across groups, we applied the distance between ranks of topics method by Havlin [18]. If  $R_1(\lambda)$  is the rank of topic  $\lambda$  in user group 1 and  $R_2(\lambda)$  is the rank of the same topic  $\lambda$  in user group 2, distance  $r_{12}(\lambda)$  between the ranks of topic  $\lambda$  in two user groups is  $r_{12}(\lambda) = |R_1(\lambda) - R_2(\lambda)|$ . Thus, the distance between two user groups is defined as the mean square root distance between the ranks of all common topics:  $r_{12} = (\frac{1}{N} \sum_{\lambda} r_{12}^2(\lambda))^{\frac{1}{2}}$ , where  $N$  is the number of common topics across user groups. We summarize the distance metric across four user groups: Left, Right, Apolitical and all population (Left, Right and Apolitical) with  $N = 23, 844$  and  $R_{max} = 281, 265$  in Table 5.

We find that the distances from right users is maximum to left, apolitical and all, and left and apolitical are close to each other in terms of distance. This suggests that right users have their own hierarchy of topics distinguished from left and apolitical users, while latter groups have more similar topics. To support our findings in distance between topic ranks, we look at the most 20 frequent Freebase topics for each user group. Right users share more politically charged content including politicians (Barack Obama, Alex Jones, Ron Paul), news channels (Russia Today, The Young Turks), military-related keywords (Gun, Police) and concepts (USA). Conversely, left-leaning users have similar interests as apolitical, giving priority to entertainment videos. For example, “Barack Obama” topic (Freebase ID */m/02mjmr*) is placed 30th popular among left users and 1st among right population.

Results of a) and b) support each other and give the following picture on political engagement of L/R/A user groups. For left users, a) says they act as apolitical users and on average do not share much political videos, with b) confirming that among top 20 video topics of left users none relate to politics. And for right users, a) states that they share more political content which is supported by b) where 9 out of top 20 topics have government, news, politics related concepts.

A possible explanation of the fact that the supposed left is much closer to the apolitical set than the right is that following *@barack-obama* is not a good proxy for political orientation due to his popularity in social media. To show that following *@barackobama* is a signal for both a) being more politicized and b) being more left-leaning we perform a number of statistical tests on differences between *@barackobama* followers and non-followers. For a) we

	Left	Right	Apolitical	All
Left	-	35733.87	33807.2	25722.16
Right	35733.87	-	49314.69	37913.44
Apolitical	33807.2	49314.69	-	23879.92
All	25722.16	37913.44	23879.92	-

**Table 5: Distance across political, apolitical and all user groups.**

count the number of known political hashtags such as *#p2*, *#tcot*, *#obama*, *#ows* and others for both user groups. For b) we count the number of words “liberal”, “progressive”, “democrat” and “conservative”, “republican” in the bios of both followers and non-followers. The idea here is that the first (abbrev. L-words) and second (abbrev. R-words) word groups are indicators of someone being left- and right- aligned respectively. Table 6 shows results with a clear message: followers of *@barackobama* are at least 4 times more likely to be left-aligned compared to non-followers (0.70% vs. 0.16%) and are twice more likely to insert political hashtags in their tweets compared to non-followers (20.5% vs. 10.3%). Ratios were tested with a Chi-square test for equality of proportions with a 95% confidence interval with significance at  $p$ -value  $< 10^{-15}$ .

## 5. EARLY VIDEO ADOPTER

This section answers a) who shares video content faster and b) which information is shared faster. Thus, we look at another dimension linking Twitter and YouTube – the time lag between the video upload and the sharing event on Twitter, also known as inter-event time or lag and denoted as  $\Delta t$ . We perform inter-event time analysis on a system level and per user. For system inter-event time analysis we collected time lags,  $\Delta t_v^w$ , per sharing event (tweet  $w$ , video  $v$ ), resulting in time lag collection  $T$ , i.e.,  $\forall w \in TWEETS, \forall v \in VIDEOS, \Delta t_v^w \in T$ , where  $TWEETS$  is a set of all tweets in data set and  $VIDEOS$  is a set of all videos. Thus, a user having more than one tweet with video has more than one time lag; similarly, a video that has been shared more than once will have more than one time lag; thus, several sharing events of a video are considered as separate sharing events, and time lag of each such event becomes a member of collection  $T$ . For per user inter-event time analysis we calculated median time lag per each user  $u$ ,  $\langle \Delta t \rangle_u^{median}$ .

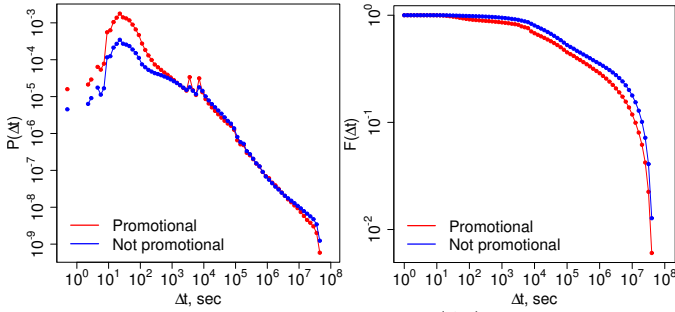
One limitation of the YouTube dataset was a non-uniform distribution of video age. Thus, we removed videos before certain epochs when YouTube and Twitter underwent changes. First, Twitter was founded in 2006, nearly one year after YouTube, thus we cannot sensibly study sharing of videos uploaded in 2005-2006. The next disrupting event is the introduction of Twitter share button in YouTube on 12/8/2010, changing the ease of sharing. Additionally, our crawled dataset had another constraint: a limit of 3,200 tweets per user which mainly has effect on tweets sample of active Twitter users. Selected sample potentially contains only recent tweets and thus relatively “young” videos in those tweets. In order to get a uniform age of shared videos, we determined a cut-off time for discarding videos of certain age at which amount of shares per user is affected the least. We removed videos older than  $\theta = 1/1/2012$ , which automatically discards tweets containing such videos. The filtered data set contained 11, 697,550 sharing events for 2,510,653 distinct videos coming from 70,874 non-promotional users.

### 5.1 Who Shares Faster in Twitter

Question a) was addressed by comparing inter-event times per different user groups. We first looked at time differences between promotional and non-promotional Twitter accounts, see Figure 1 from a system’s point of view (rather than aggregating per-user). Visually, we observe that promotional accounts are faster at shar-

	Political #	L-words	R-words	Total
followers	20.5% (3829)	0.70% (130)	0.28% (53)	18664
-followers	10.3% (8615)	0.16% (131)	0.35% (281)	83789

**Table 6: Percentage and counts in brackets of users having political tweet hashtags, “left”- and “right”- words in account description of *@barackobama* followers and non-followers.**



**Figure 1: Inter-event time distribution  $P(\Delta t)$  and accumulative time distribution  $F(\Delta t)$ s of promotional (red) and non-promotional (blue) accounts.**

ing content compared to regular users, see the head at  $P(\Delta t)$  and tail at  $F(\Delta t)$ . Statistically,  $\text{median}(\text{promo}) = 10^{4.8}\text{sec}$  (18 hours),  $\text{median}(\text{non-promo}) = 10^{5.1}\text{sec}$  (38 hours). Within an hour promotional accounts have twice amount of shares compared to non-promotional accounts which constitutes twentieth and tenth percentile respectively.

Having confirmed that there is a difference between human and “machine” behaviour, we performed a per-user inter-event time analysis for different user groups of non-promotional accounts. For each user group  $U_G$  we calculate the median lag per group (median of users’ medians):  $\Delta t_G = \langle \langle \Delta t_u^{\text{median}} \rangle_{u \in U_G}^{\text{median}} \rangle$ .

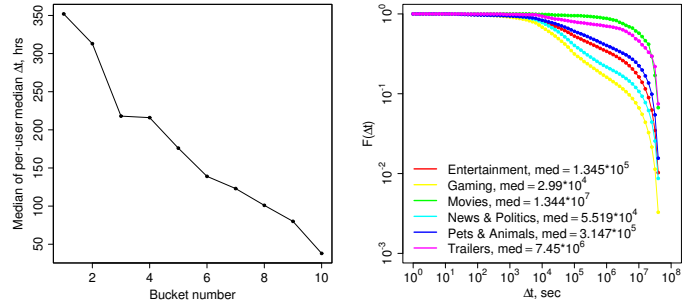
For example, in Section 4.5 we looked at who shares what per political user groups (Left vs. Right). Here we find that on average right users share newly uploaded video content at least 3 days earlier compared to left users. Note that the set of videos being shared is different though. Our findings on the median of the median inter-event times for various user groups are presented in Table 7. Time differences in the per topic medians follow the same trend as the overall distribution (not presented here), so the observed differences cannot solely be explained by differences in category preferences for different user groups.

We highlight the following observations on who shares faster: concerning location, urban users are around 14 hours faster than rural users, and across gender women are much slower compared to men. Globally, people from Indonesia and Thailand have a reaction time in the order of a day, whereas the greatest lag in the order of a half of a month is observed from people tweeting in Brazil. But as we selected only English profiles the results for other countries might be conflated with other factors.

While doing our analysis we also observed that an important dimension of the “quickness” of the users relates to how often they share videos on Twitter. Figure 2 shows the median per-user median of the inter-event times for users divided into deciles according to the number of YouTube videos they have shared. The inter-event times are given in hours and range from 352 hours for the least active to 38 hours for the most active users. As the difference is quite striking, we inspected term clouds for the Twitter bios of the least active YouTube sharers and the most active YouTube sharers. Interestingly, the two are quite similar, apart from a prominent “YouTube” for the most active users, indicating that the difference in lag time is related to the activity level, not topical interests.

## 5.2 What is Shared Faster in Twitter

To answer question b) we performed system inter-event time analysis and distributed time lags in  $T$  into relevant video category. If  $T_C$  is a collection of system lags of set of videos belonging to category  $C$  ( $VIDEOS^C$ ), then  $\Delta t_v^w \in T_C$ , if  $v \in VIDEOS^C$ . YouTube provides 19 video categories, in Figure 2 inter-event time



**Figure 2: Median of per-user median inter-event times for users bucketed (into deciles) by the number of YouTube videos shared (left). Accumulative time distribution  $F(\Delta t)$  of videos belonging to various YouTube categories (right).**

of 6 categories which exhibit different patterns time distribution are shown, due to space limits. Remaining 13 video categories lag show similar patterns as *Entertainment* and *Pets & Animals*. Our findings show that among all videos, *Gaming* and *News & Politics* videos are the fastest shared with median time of 8 and 15 hours respectively, *Movies* and *Trailers* have the greatest lag between video uploaded and being tweeted with median of 5 and 3 months respectively.

## 6. VIDEO POPULARITY ANALYSIS

### 6.1 Forecasting Video Popularity

In this section, we present our work on early indicators of the popularity of a video, i.e., its amount of views a sufficient amount of time after its creation. Our approach is based on analyzing the Twitter attention to the video in the first moments after its creation, including the user profile information explained above. For this task, we filter our data following the cutoff date explained in Section 5, and restrict our analysis to videos that were created before June 1st 2013, a total of 4,822,675 videos created more than a month before the data retrieval date. We estimate the popularity of a video through the amount of views more than a month after its creation, following previous approaches by Szabo and Huberman [31], in line with the very fast decay of views that most videos have in YouTube as shown in Crane and Sornette [11].

Category	Med. int. time	num. users
promotional	27	15132
non-promotional	141	70874
promotional urban	40	2096
promotional rural	25	1693
non-promotional urban	143	5951
non-promotional rural	157	5928
left	163	11356
right	90	1355
male	142	24263
female	187	16293
student	156	877
not student	141	69997
mother	191	450
not mother	141	70424
father	85	356
not father	141	70518

**Table 7: Comparison of median of median inter-event times (in hours) for various groups of users**

For each video, we analyze its Twitter attention during the first week after its creation. We remove from our analysis all videos that, during this first week, did not have any sharing event in our data. This removes old videos that were created before Twitter grew to its actual user base, leaving us with a set of 276,488 videos. To analyze the role of user interests and promotions, we divide our analysis of Twitter data in two subsets: one only based on promotional users, and one based on non-promotional users. After such filtering, we have a total amount of 1,200,924 shares and 182,135 videos from promotional users, and 779,821 shares and 133,373 videos from non-promotional users. Note that these two datasets are disjoint in terms of Twitter data. No Twitter share is taken into account in both, but they overlap in 17,093 videos.

## 6.2 Twitter Video Metrics

We measure the early Twitter attention towards a video aggregating two types of data: i) amount of tweets or attention volume, and ii) reputation metrics calculated from the follower network and retweeting behavior of the users involved. For each video, we computed five metrics of Twitter attention that summarize different factors that potentially increase video popularity:

We measure the total attention in Twitter to a video through the *amount of shares*  $S_v$  during the first week, which were produced by the set of users that shared the video in the first week, noted as  $U_v \in U$ . Each user  $u$  created  $n_v(u)$  shares of the video, which were received by the set of followers of those users. We define the *exposure*  $E_v$  of a video as the sum of followers of the users that shared the video in the first week, where  $F(u)$  is the set of followers of user  $u$ , and  $f(u) = |F(u)|$ . This measure approximates the size of the first order neighborhood of the accounts sharing the video, overcounting their common friends.

We aggregate the *social impact*  $I_v$  of the users that shared the video estimated as their mean amount of retweets for tweets with nonzero retweets ( $R_0(u)$ ). To improve estimation of the reputation of the users sharing the video in the first week, we approximate the size of the second-order neighborhood of the users that shared the video. For this, we calculate the *second-order exposure*  $\mathcal{E}_v$ , as the sum of the amount of followers of the followers of the users that shared the video.

Each user exposed to the shares of the video is subject to have its attention diluted over a set of different information sources. For this reason, we calculate the *share of voice*  $A_v$  of the early users, as the ratio of their amount of followers divided by the average amount of users followed by their followers, where  $f^{-1}(v)$  is the amount of users that  $v$  follows. This way, we correct the case of users with many followers, who would give a lower share of voice if they follow a large amount of other users. On the other hand, a user with a low amount of followers can have a large share of voice, when its followers do not follow many other accounts.

We use these five metrics to create a video vector with a sixth dimension being its final amount of views. In the following, we present our analysis of the relations between these five metrics and the popularity of a video.

## 6.3 Factors Influencing Video Popularity

Amount of shares $S_v = \sum_{u \in U_v} n_v(u)$	Exposure $E_v = \sum_{u \in U_v} f(u)$	Social impact $I_v = \sum_{u \in U_v} R_0(u)$
Second-order exposure $\mathcal{E}_v = \sum_{u \in U_v} \sum_{u' \in F(u)} f(u')$	Share of voice $A_v = \sum_{u \in U_v} f(u) / \langle f^{-1}(u') \rangle_{u' \in F(u)}$	

Table 8: Twitter social metrics used related to video popularity.

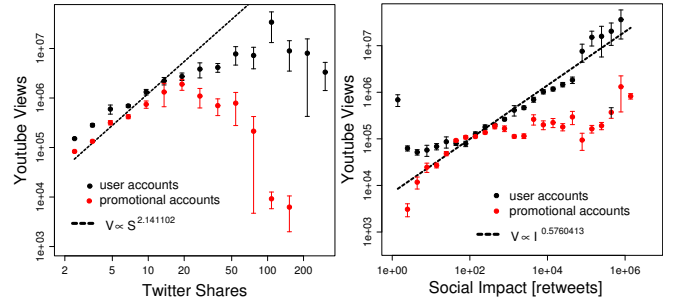


Figure 3: Mean amount of views videos binned by amount of shares (left) and social impact of early adopters (right). Error bars show standard error, and dashed lines regression results.

The distribution of views per video, as well as the other metrics explained above, have large variance and are skewed to the right. To avoid the uneven leverage of extreme values of these distributions, we have applied a logarithmic transformation to each one of them, reducing their variance but keeping their rank. In the first step of our analysis, we computed correlation coefficients between the logarithm of the amount of views and the other five variables. The results for promotional and non-promotional data are summarized in Table 9, revealing significant correlations for all of them. Some of these correlations are of very low magnitude or even negative sign, suggesting a more careful analysis.

Our first observation is that the amount of shares in the first week of a video is a better predictor for its popularity in the case of non-promotional users and promotional ones ( $\rho = 0.184$  vs  $\rho = 0.298$ ). The left panel of Figure 3 shows the mean amount of views of videos binned exponentially by their amount of Twitter shares.

The two types of user activities diverge after 20 shares in the first week, where for the case of non-promotional users the amount of views appears to be increasing but saturating. Regression on a power-law relation between views and shares  $V \propto S^\alpha$  reveals a superlinear scaling with  $\alpha = 2.18 \pm 0.02$ , i.e., the final views of a video has a quadratic relation to the amount of regular user shares in the first week. As an example of this superlinear growth, the mean amount of views for videos with 2 shares in the first week is 151,374.5, for videos with 7 shares is 644,522.4, and for videos with 12 shares is 2,349,317. This gives an increase of almost 500K views for the five shares after the first two, but an increase of more than 1.7M for the five shares after the first seven.

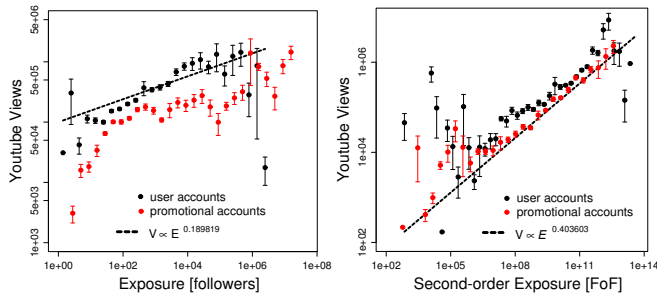
The diverging pattern in both types of user activity reveals that, when promotional accounts share the same video more than 20 times in the same week, the final amount of views does not increase. In fact, there is a decreasing pattern of views, suggesting the existence of information overload or spamming behavior in promotional users.

For both types of Twitter users, the aggregated social impact in terms of mean retweet rates is the best predictor for the popularity of a video ( $\rho = 0.394$  and  $\rho = 0.28$ ). The right panel of Fig. 3 shows the mean view values for bins of the aggregated social impact, with the result of regression of the form  $V \propto I^\beta$ , where

Type	$X$									
	$S_v$		$E_v$		$I_v$		$\mathcal{E}_v$		$A_v$	
Nonpr	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.08	0.4	0.4	0.27	0.29	-0.05	-0.16
Promo	0.18	0.19	0.16	0.16	0.28	0.26	0.13	0.09	0.08	0.04

Table 9: Pearson’s (first value) and Spearman’s (second value) correlation coefficients between video views and Twitter measures:  $\rho(\log(V_v), \log(X))$ , all with  $p < 10^{-10}$





**Figure 4: Mean amount of views videos binned by first and second order exposure. Error bars show standard error, and dashed lines regression results.**

$\beta = 0.576 \pm 0.004$  for non-promotional users and  $\beta = 0.358 \pm 0.003$  for promotional ones. This result reveals a sublinear relation between the amount of views and the social impact of the accounts that shared the video in the first week, close to a square root.

The amount of views of videos showed a low positive correlation coefficient with the exposure of the shares in the first week, measured through amount of followers. The left panel of Fig. 4 shows the mean amount of views versus the exposure in the first week, revealing a very soft increasing pattern in both. On the other hand, the amount of views has a more substantial correlation with the second-order exposure, with correlation coefficients of 0.268 and 0.126 for regular and promotional users respectively. The right panel of Fig. 4 shows this stronger relation, with a regression result of exponent  $0.404 \pm 0.004$  for non-promotional users, and of  $0.155 \pm 0.003$  for promotional ones. This comparison reveals that the second-order exposure is a much better predictor for the popularity of a video than the amount of followers of the initial sharers. This result calls for more stylized reputation metrics that take into account global information beyond amount of followers and retweet rates, for example centrality [15], or coreness [13] metrics.

Finally, the aggregated share of voice of the accounts that shared the video during the first week did not provide clear results, with a significant negative correlation of  $-0.047$  for non-promotional users, and of  $0.076$  for promotional ones. This suggest that, if information overload and competition for attention are present in Twitter, they need to be measured with more precise approximations that the correction we presented in the previous section. Nevertheless, the share of voice of the users sharing a video still contains relevant information that we introduce in the regression model we explain below.

## 6.4 Combining Data in a Regression Model

The above results show the pairwise relation between the amount of views of a video and each one of our five Twitter metrics. This analysis ignores the possible effect of the combination of different metrics, as it can be expected that they are correlated with each other. To provide a deeper analysis on how these Twitter metrics influence the final amount of views, we propose a substitutes model in which the products of powers of each variable are proportional to the final amount of views:

$$V_v \propto S_v^\alpha \cdot I_v^\beta \cdot E_v^\gamma \cdot \mathcal{E}_v^\delta \cdot A_v^\kappa \quad (1)$$

This model is equivalent to a linear regression model after the logarithmic transformation of all the independent variables. Training this regressor on the promotional user data gives  $R^2 = 0.107$ , explaining about 10% of the variance of  $\log(V)$ . On the non-promotional user dataset, the regressor achieves  $R^2 = 0.199$ , explaining almost 20% of the variance of the final amount of views of a video based exclusively on information extracted from Twitter.

Type	$S_v$	$E_v$	$I_v$	$\mathcal{E}_v$	$A_v$
Not promo	1.083*	0.096	0.449*	0.118*	$-0.102^*$
Promotional	0.612*	0.164*	0.307*	0.079*	0.030

**Table 10: Regression coefficients for Eq. 1. Significance level \*  $p < 10^{-9}$ , or  $p > 0.01$  otherwise.**

This opens the possibility to improve previous models that used only data from YouTube [31, 28], which could also be combined with data from other online communities, as previously done in Soysa et al. [30] with a limited sample of Facebook data.

The estimated coefficients for the exponents of Eq. 1 are reported in Table 10, which allow us to compare the size of the effects of each Twitter metric. This analysis reveals the lack of relevance of the first-order exposure for the case of non-promotional users as also shown in Cha et al. [6]. The correlation between first order exposure and views shown in Fig. 4 is a confound due to the correlation of exposure with other metrics, such as impact or second-order exposure.

To assess the prediction power of our model for non-promotional users, we transformed the regression problem to a dichotomous classification, in which we tag a video as *popular* if it gathered at least 10,000 views. Using the regression model explained above, we can predict if a video will reach more than 10,000 views based on the first week of Twitter activity. If the estimator of Eq. 1 gives a value above 10,000, we classify the video as *popular*.

We performed 10-fold cross validation on the non-promotional users dataset, fitting the regressor to 90% of the data and validating it on the rest 10%. The mean base rate of popular videos for the 10 evaluations is 0.493, and our predictor achieves a mean precision of 0.715 and a mean recall of 0.534 for the *popular* class. Both values are significantly above the precision of random classifiers over the same partitions, which produced a precision of 0.492 and a recall of 0.494. This experiment shows that, using Twitter data only, a prediction can achieve a precision value much higher than expected from a random classifier.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

We gathered a high-quality dataset based on the combination of two sources: 17 million unique public tweets for 87K users on Twitter and YouTube data for 5 million videos.

Through this combination of data sets, we could obtain novel, detailed insights into who watches (and shares) what on YouTube, and when (that is, how quickly). We applied a set of heuristics to infer demographic data including gender, location, political alignment, and interests. We designed a new method to distinguish promotional Twitter accounts, who almost exclusively share their own YouTube videos and validated our expectation that promotional users share their own videos much faster than regular ones. Our results also include a new method to characterize different user segments in terms of YouTube categories, Twitter activity, and Twitter user bios. These allowed us to analyze the relation between demographic factors and the features of YouTube videos, including their amount of views. Our detailed statistical analysis reveals correlations between Twitter behavior and YouTube video content. In addition, our clustering analysis shows that the topic preferences of the two platforms are largely aligned. Our results on politics quantitatively show that politically right users are further from the center than politically left users, and among all video categories News & Politics correlates most with social and with sharing behavior. Our detailed analysis distinguishes which user types share videos earlier/later as well as which video classes are shared earlier/later. Finally, we developed a regression model for the effect

of early Twitter video shares by influential users on the final view count and we conclude by observing that second-order neighborhoods and retweet rates are much better predictors of ultimate video popularity than raw follower counts.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ETH received funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation under the grant CR21H1\_146499 / 1. The authors would like to thank GNIP for providing data during a free trial period of their Powertrack product.

## 9. REFERENCES

- [1] F. Al Zamal, W. Liu, and D. Ruths. Homophily and latent attribute inference: Inferring latent attributes of twitter users from neighbors. In *ICWSM*, 2012.
- [2] S. Asur, B. A. Huberman, G. Szabo, and C. Wang. Trends in Social Media: Persistence and Decay. In *ICWSM*, pages 434–437, 2011.
- [3] A.-L. Barabasi. The origin of bursts and heavy tails in human dynamics. *Nature*, 435:207, 2005.
- [4] P. Barbera. Birds of the Same Feather Tweet Together. Bayesian Ideal Point Estimation Using Twitter Data, 2012. Forthcoming.
- [5] S. Bostandjiev, J. O’Donovan, and T. Höllerer. Tasteweights: A visual interactive hybrid recommender system. In *RecSys*, pages 35–42, 2012.
- [6] M. Cha, H. Haddadi, F. Benevenuto, and P. K. Gummadi. Measuring user influence in twitter: The million follower fallacy. In *ICWSM*, 2010.
- [7] M. Conover, J. Ratkiewicz, M. Francisco, B. Gonçalves, F. Menczer, and A. Flammini. Political polarization on twitter. In *ICWSM*, 2011.
- [8] M. D. Conover, B. Gonc, A. Flammini, and F. Menczer. Partisan Asymmetries in Online Political Activity. *EPJ DataScience*, 1(6):1–17, 2012.
- [9] M. D. Conover, B. Goncalves, J. Ratkiewicz, A. Flammini, and F. Menczer. Predicting the Political Alignment of Twitter Users. In *PASSAT-SocialCom*, pages 192–199, 2011.
- [10] R. Crane, F. Schweitzer, and D. Sornette. Power law signature of media exposure in human response waiting time distributions. *Physical Review E*, 81(5):056101, 2010.
- [11] R. Crane and D. Sornette. Robust dynamic classes revealed by measuring the response function of a social system. *PNAS*, 105(41):15649–15653, 2008.
- [12] F. Figueiredo, F. Benevenuto, and J. M. Almeida. The tube over time: Characterizing popularity growth of youtube videos. In *WSDM*, pages 745–754, 2011.
- [13] D. Garcia, P. Mavrodiev, and F. Schweitzer. Social resilience in online communities: The autopsy of friendster. *1st ACM Conference on Online Social Networks (Forthcoming)*, 2013.
- [14] D. Garcia, F. Mendez, U. Serdült, and F. Schweitzer. Political polarization and popularity in online participatory media. In *PLEAD*, pages 3–10, Nov. 2012.
- [15] D. Gayo-Avello. Nepotistic relationships in twitter and their impact on rank prestige algorithms. *Inf. Process. Manage.*, 49(6):1250–1280, 2013.
- [16] S. Goel, J. M. Hofman, and M. I. Sirer. Who does what on the web: A large-scale study of browsing behavior. In *ICWSM*, 2012.
- [17] P. I. Good. *Permutation, Parametric, and Bootstrap Tests of Hypotheses*. Springer, 3 edition, 2005.
- [18] S. Havlin. The distance between zipf plots. *Physica A Statistical and Theoretical Physics*, 216(1-2):148–150, 1995.
- [19] S. R. Kairam, M. R. Morris, J. Teevan, D. J. Liebling, and S. T. Dumais. Towards supporting search over trending events with social media. In *ICWSM*, 2013.
- [20] M. Karsai, K. Kaski, A.-L. Barabási, and J. Kertész. Universal features of correlated bursty behaviour, May 2012.
- [21] G. Karypis. Cluto: A clustering toolkit, 2002. <http://www.cs.umn.edu/~cluto>.
- [22] J. Kulshrestha, F. Kooti, A. Nikraves, and P. K. Gummadi. Geographic dissection of the twitter network. In *ICWSM*, 2012.
- [23] M. S. S. Laine and G. Ercal. User Groups in Social Networks: An Experimental Study on YouTube. In *2011 44th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, pages 1–10, Jan. 2011.
- [24] J. Lehmann, B. Gonçalves, J. J. Ramasco, and C. Cattuto. Dynamical classes of collective attention in twitter. In *WWW*, page 251, New York, New York, USA, 2012.
- [25] Q. V. Liao, C. Wagner, P. Pirolli, and W.-T. Fu. Understanding experts’ and novices’ expertise judgment of twitter users. In *CHI*, pages 2461–2464, 2012.
- [26] A. Mislove, S. Lehmann, Y.-y. Ahn, J.-p. Onnela, and J. N. Rosenquist. Understanding the demographics of twitter users. In *ICWSM*, pages 554–557, 2011.
- [27] M. Pennacchiotti and A.-M. Popescu. Democrats, republicans and starbucks aficionados: User classification in twitter. In *KDD*, pages 430–438, 2011.
- [28] H. Pinto, J. M. Almeida, and M. A. Gonçalves. Using early view patterns to predict the popularity of youtube videos. In *WSDM*, pages 365–374, 2013.
- [29] L. Qiu, Q. Tang, and A. B. Whinston. Two formulas for success in social media: Social learning and network effects, 2013. Forthcoming.
- [30] D. Soysa, D. Chen, O. Au, and A. Bermak. Predicting youtube content popularity via facebook data: A network spread model for optimizing multimedia delivery. In *CIDM*, pages 214–221, 2013.
- [31] G. Szabo and B. A. Huberman. Predicting the popularity of online content. *Communications of the ACM*, 53(8):80, 2010.
- [32] J. Teevan, D. Ramage, and M. R. Morris. #twittersearch: A comparison of microblog search and web search. In *WSDM*, pages 35–44, 2011.
- [33] A. Ulges, D. Borth, and M. Koch. Content analysis meets viewers: linking concept detection with demographics on youtube. *IJMIR*, 2(2):145–157, 2013.
- [34] C. Wang and B. A. Huberman. Long trend dynamics in social media. *EPJ Data Science*, page 8, May 2012.
- [35] I. Weber, V. R. K. Garimella, and E. Borra. Political search trends. In *SIGIR*, pages 1012–1012. ACM, 2012.
- [36] I. Weber, V. R. K. Garimella, and E. Borra. Inferring audience partisanship for youtube videos. In *WWW*, pages 43–44, 2013.
- [37] I. Weber, V. R. K. Garimella, and A. Teka. Political hashtag trends. In *ECIR*, pages 857–860, 2013.
- [38] I. Weber and A. Jaimes. Who uses web search for what: and how. In *WSDM*, pages 15–24, 2011.
- [39] Y. Wu, C. Zhou, J. Xiao, J. Kurths, and H. J. Schellnhuber. Evidence for a bimodal distribution in human communication. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107(44):18803–18808, Oct. 2010.