Study uses Twitter to find biological rhythms

By Alyson Warhit
via UWIRE (Cornell Daily Sun)

A Cornell U. study published Friday in the journal Science used Twitter to study changes in peoples’ moods, discovering that seasonal variations in day length affect people in similar ways across cultures, indicating there is an underlying biological rhythm at work.

The authors of the study, Scott A. Golder grad and Prof. Michael Macy, sociology, analyzed two years’ worth of tweets by 2.4 million people around the globe. In total, the researchers analyzed 509 million messages.

While Macy notes there have been other studies that use Twitter to assess moods, he said many of these studies tended to focus on individuals’ moods on particular dates such as holidays, or instead “take the pulse of the entire population.” They do not provide insight into the daily rhythms of an individual, he said.

Golder said that the team assessed the moods of millions of Twitter users by using Linguistics Inquiry and Word Count technology, which measured the percentage of positive and negative words at each hour of the day.

“Of course, these findings are obvious,” Macy said. “People probably look at the morning peak of positive moods and how it deteriorates throughout the day and attribute that to working all day. But in fact, what we found is that a hard workday is not enough to explain the trend.”

The study also found that as days get longer, moods tend to be more positive. They become increasingly negative as days shorten.

“We found that it is not the absolute length of the day that was associated with mood, but whether the days were getting longer or shorter,” Macy said.

“The groundbreaking for the E & F science renovation ushers in a new era of excellence at GSU,” said GSU President Dr. Elaine Maimon.

The official groundbreaking ceremony will take place on Tuesday, October 18 at 10:30a.m in the F Wing Atrium. All students are encouraged to come and be a part of this historic day.

The university will also be celebrating the achievements of Dr. Karen D’Arcy and our science faculty whose considerable efforts won a coveted $3 million National Science Foundation grant for expanding GSU’s science research labs.

The renovation will include new labs for biology, chemistry, occupational therapy, physical therapy, communication disorders, math, and computer science.

The $23.5 million project is planned in two 18 month phases. In total the construction project is expected to take roughly 3 years to complete.

“The groundbreaking for the E & F science renovation ushers in a new era of excellence at GSU. We will celebrate the construction of twenty-first century science laboratories. Soon we will have facilities worthy of our exemplary students and faculty,” said Maimon.
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Governors State University
**Film Review: “The Guard” Falls Short**

Despite the best efforts of Don Cheadle (left) and Brendan Gleeson (right), "The Guard" fails to make a lasting impression. *Image courtesy of The New York Times / Sony Pictures Classics*

Reviewed by: Leah Chapman

"The Guard" is a dark comedy that showcases the lives of a charming Irish policeman Sergeant Gerry Boyle (Brendan Gleeson) and a boring, mundane American FBI agent Wendell Everett (Don Cheadle). This off-beat story however is essentially too long for comedic relief and portrays a rather obscene drug and weapons culture in Ireland.

Even though the film has excellent acting, none of the characters seem to be able to relate to one another, which leaves the audience feeling a sense of confusion and general disconnect. Cheadle's portrayal was decent, but lacked originality and creativeness, which ultimately suggests that his role was extremely underwritten. Gleeson's portrayal was fantastic, but overshadowed the entire film from beginning to end, providing little emphasis on anything unrelated to his racist, sexual, and drug-induced behaviors.

The cinematography was solid and provided several shots that flowed from one scene to the next, but nothing else can be said about it. Even though this film was British, it used several country-western styled songs to progressively show the impending battle between good and evil. This nuance in itself is intriguing and added to the overall comedic disposition and undertone of the film, but it could not save it.

If you are looking for a good, comedic British film to pass the time, I would suggest "The Guard". However, it does not leave a lasting, worthwhile impression and the charm of the film will quickly fade.

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**Twitter Study**

Macy said that one of the most important implications of his research is the use of innovative methods to study human behavior. "The methods in the past included surveys, field research and lab experiments that either failed to record human behavior in real time or were based on extremely small samples," Macy said.

“What Twitter and other social media make possible for the first time is the chance for social scientists to observe human behavior in real time with an enormously large scale,” he said. "That is really an extraordinary opportunity.”

Golder echoed this sentiment, adding that the study reflects larger changes in social sciences research. “Really what this study says to us is that more and more of the future of social science is going to be involving data from the Internet,” Golder said. “There will always be room for surveys and interviews, but these new methods of using Internet data are going to start to become really important.

Students studying sociology, economics or political science have the incredible opportunity to enter these fields at a time when they're completely changing.”
Sudoku: Solution on page 7

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Using FamilySearch.org in Your Genealogy Research on October, Friday October 28 from 2 to 3:30 p.m.
All workshops take place in Room D2430
Class size limited to 25 persons per session.

Print Correction
In the Sept. 21 story “GSU Students and Faculty Remember Events of 9-11” Rafiah Muhammad was misidentified in a photo. She was speaking at the dual degree event featuring the Under Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. The Phoenix regrets the error.

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