A Typology of the #DisTwitter Community

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The #DisTwitter Community provides a digital space where users can discuss theme park concepts and events. Users are able to find a connection with others through the commonul bond of Disney Parks. Posts in the community provide different levels of perceived usefulness of both the individual posting and the users in the community. The Users with Influence (high number of followers / low #DisTwitter engagement) provide usefulness of celebrity endorsements of park concepts. The Gurus (high number of followers / high #DisTwitter engagement) disseminate information, along with providing expert commentary around park history and park events. Once Upon a Timers (low number of followers / low #DisTwitter engagement) ask questions as infrequent visitors, while the #DisTwitter Family (low amount of followers / high #DisTwitter engagement) offers a community for park visitors. Overall, each segment in the typology provides a unique level of influence and usefulness to those that follow each account.

#DisTwitter Community

The communal bond of Disney Parks discussion between Twitter users creates a cultural connection and deep engagement (Bentley et al., 2021), supporting the Yalcin (2020) social media marketing model of consumers exchanging useful park information with one another. The #DisTwitter community includes global conversations discussing the parks and included concepts. With the yearly increase of park visitors (Smith, 2020), individuals will find the perceived usefulness of commentary (Davis, 1986) in the community resulting in a high volume of likes and comments, referred to as deep engagement. Deep engagement founded in common interest and geographic cultural connections between users and followers (Bently et al., 2021) serves as perceived usefulness and a positive attitude toward using Twitter (Davis, 1986) for potential park visitors seeking out information.

Technology Acceptance Model

The application of the technology acceptance model (TAM) provides a framework of behavioral intention of the ease of use and usefulness of #DisTwitter. As the model is applied, the users exposed to the useful content determine the behavioral intentions of engagement, leading to the actual system use of the Twitter community platform (Venkatesh & Davis, 1996)

Typology

The typology (Table 1) will utilize the measurement of social media engagement from #DisTwitter users (x-axis) and the volume of followers (y-axis). Engagement is defined as interaction mentioning any Disney Park properties. Interaction includes content about products, experiences, attractions, or general informational posts mentioning the company. Followers are classified as the quantitative measure of social media followers.
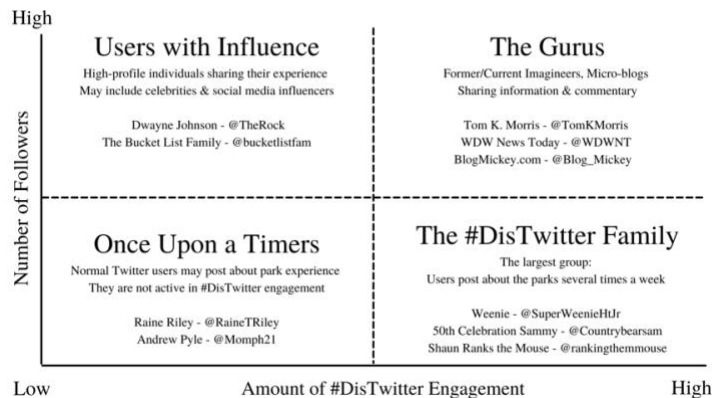

Table 1: Typology of #DisTwitter

Users with Influence (High Number of Followers & Low #DisTwitter Engagement)

Users with influence are categorized by their high social media following, due to their celebrity or influencer status. Though they may have high engagement because of their popularity, there is little engagement from the #DisTwitter Community. This segment includes high influential users (e.g. The Rock) that may discuss their Disney Trip through tweets.

The Gurus (High Number of Followers & High #DisTwitter Engagement)

The Gurus influence a large following through their position or title in the community. These users are primarily micro-bloggers or Imagineers. For example, retired Imagineer of 42 years (Ferguson, 2020), Tom K. Morris (@TomKMorris), shares park commentary with his 12.9k followers. Micro-blog WDW News Today (@WDWNT) provides news articles around construction updates and events at the parks to their 202.9k followers. The Gurus' lived experience and professional opinions offer useful knowledge for community members in the TAM Model.

Once Upon a Timers (Low Number of Followers & Low #DisTwitter Engagement)

This segment is classified as users who may speak about their Disney Trip, but do not regularly post about Disney Parks. While there is low engagement, the public nature of the platform provides useful information that can be searched on Twitter.

The #DisTwitter Family (**Low Number of Followers & High #DisTwitter Engagement)**

The most common audience segment is the #DisTwitter Family that includes cast members (e.g., @countrybearsam) and fandom accounts (e.g., @rankingthemouse). In some cases, accounts have created an alias (e.g., @SuperWeenieHtJr) to interact with others in the community (Lanier & Fowler, 2013). The perceived usefulness in this segment could provide a community of make-believe characters (Lantz, 2019; Lanier & Fowler, 2013) or formed friendships with other Disney fans, based on cultural bonds (Bently et al., 2021).

Application

Through the typology, Disney Parks could utilize new marketing tactics toward certain quadrants. By understanding user influence and the perceived usefulness of each segment, researchers could predict social media exposure of park announcements and other topical interests in the community. Each quadrant has a different influence and usefulness sought from users. For example, a new ride feature statement could be found useful in one segment as compared to another. Upon releasing a recent park announcement or cultural event, the typology could provide a detailed analysis of the audience members discussing various topics. While The Gurus may not discuss events like Black Lives Matter, The #DisTwitter Family provides commentary through a unique perspective, such as the lack of African American representation at a theme park convention (e.g. ParksCon21). The understanding of topical issues in each segment could direct social initiatives from the Walt Disney Company.

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