Who Gets the Attention? The Interactions among Similar Social Media Content

by

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Abstract: Social media platforms contain a massive volume of content vying for users’ attention. We study what factors attract attention for one user’s content when other users are publishing similar content. We conjecture that the attention allocated to a user’s content can be suppressed or amplified by the spread of similar content. To investigate this phenomenon, we formulated a generalized self-exciting point process model and estimated the model using Twitter data. We observe that, on average, a user’s content tends to be amplified and receive more attention when similar content from other users is concurrently diffusing. We also identify an asymmetry among users that produce content as those connected with larger networks are better able to gain recognition and benefit from the diffusion of similar content.

Bio: Bin Gu is Earl and Gladys Davis Distinguished Professor and Associate Dean of China Programs at the W P Carey School of Business at Arizona State University. Professor Gu's research interests are in online platforms, online social media and social network, fintech, mobile commerce and IT-enabled business models. His work has appeared in Management Science, MIS Quarterly, Information Systems Research, Journal of Management Information Systems, Production and Operations Management, Journal of Retailing, and other academic journals. Professor Gu has received multiple research grants from the National Science Foundation (US), National Natural Science Foundation of China, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the NET Institute, Center for the Studies of Economic Liberty, and Center for Service Leadership.

Professor Gu currently serves on the editorial board of MIS Quarterly as a senior editor. He also serves as an associate editor or program committee member of International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS), INFORMS Conference on Information Systems Technology (CIST) and ACM Conference on Electronic Commerce (ACM EC).

Professor Gu's research was awarded the 2018 Workshop on Information Systems and Economics Best Paper Award, the 2017 Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences Best Paper Award, the 2017 International Conference on Information Systems Best Paper in Track Award, the 2016 W P Carey Faculty Research Award, the 2012 and 2014 Emerald Citations of Excellence Award, the 2014 Americas Conference on Information Systems Best Research-in-Progress Award, the Journal of Retailing Top Cited Article 2007-2011, the 2008 Information Systems Research Best Published Paper Award, and the 2007 International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS) Best Paper-in-Track Award. Before joining academia, Professor Gu had worked for Arthur Andersen as a consultant.