Supporting Comment
Moderators in Identifying High Quality Online News Comments

Deokgun Park, Simranjit Sachar, Nicholas Diakopoulos, Niklas Elmqvist
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Comments
Bernie Sanders’s Gift to His Party

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD  MAY 3, 2016

The Democratic Party is not Bernie Sanders’ party. He should start his own.

Kenny  Huntington, NY  2 minutes ago
His party? How long has Bernie declared himself a democrat?

Nick  NYC  3 minutes ago
As a paid subscriber, I don’t want to read any opinion pieces by the editorial board. Write them as individuals. When you endorse Clinton as the best candidate, but then tell the Democratic party to "listen" to Sanders, it feels hypocritical. To me it feels and sounds as though you are saying, "She knows more and should lead the country. Yet, listen to Sanders because he knows when the knowledge lacks judgement, but he can’t lead the country because he’s unrealistic with the current congress so vote Clinton to keep the system going". Just stop.

Robert Roth  NYC  3 minutes ago
The Times sounds like it got triangulated.
In an ideal world,
In reality,
I don't want to read the comments because they'll be mean.
To save the world
A Plea for Caution From Russia
What Putin Has to Say to Americans About Syria

By VLADIMIR V. PUTIN  SEPT. 11, 2013

MOSCOW — RECENT events surrounding Syria have prompted me to speak directly to the American people and their political leaders. It is important to do so at a time of insufficient communication between our societies.

Relations between us have passed through different stages. We stood against each other during the cold war. But we were also allies once, and defeated the Nazis together. The universal international organization — the United Nations — was then established to prevent such devastation from

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6,367 submitted
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The Opinion Pages | OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

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9,000 comments per day
Good comments

Heroic
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Relations between us have passed through different stages. We stood against each other during the cold war. But we were also allies once, and defeated the Nazis together. The universal international organization — the United Nations — was then established to prevent such devastation from happening again.

There is not "every reason" to believe that the opposition fighters used chemical weapons to murder large numbers of their own friends and family. They don't even have the capacity to deploy such weapons on this scale. The fact that Putin must resort to this incredible claim, and bury it deep in his statement, illustrates the weakness of his position on this point. It would be wonderful if the USA were not exceptional, if every nation would stand together against such crimes. But, when they don't, inaction and even obstruction on the part of others is no reason not to act ourselves. The founders of the United Nations did not envision that a seat on the Security Council was a license to ignore or overrule every tenet of international law, on the grounds that anything that any permanent member of the Security Council allows must therefore be allowed. I hope that Russia will fulfill its role.
The Opinion Pages | OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

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For all the differences that may exist between us, we should not forget the common values that bind us. The search for peace is always a priority for me. It is the responsibility of states to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches those in need, and that such aid is not hampered by any misgivings or misunderstandings.

We are at a stage of history where we should focus on the single goal of peace and integrity. We should not let division and mistrust stand in the way of achieving that goal. I hope that the American people will understand the importance of dialogue and cooperation.

The use of chemical weapons is a serious threat to the lives of innocent civilians. The current situation is unacceptable, and the international community must take action to address it. As the leader of this country, I call on the United States to work with me to find a peaceful solution to this crisis.

I believe that the United States has a role to play in bringing about a peaceful resolution to the conflict. I hope that the American people will join me in this effort, and support the efforts of those who are working to bring an end to the suffering and violence in Syria.

I thank you for your attention and your consideration of my plea for caution.

By VLADIMIR V. PUTIN

September 11, 2013

NYT Picks 85
Say what you will about the Russians and Mr. Putin in particular. This reaching out is unprecedented. Surely our country and our leaders cannot ignore this gesture from the Russian government. We, at the very least, should meet this offer in sincerity and in the hope, that something good and lasting will come of the discussions between our two nations. The stakes are too high to let this moment ever take either one of our nations. We really can live.
Drawbacks?
I was cursed with expensive taste and a low budget.
Meals On A Budget
Eating Healthy Does Not Have To Be Expensive!

Scalable way?
Over 1,000,000,000 served
FACEBOOK
NEEDS A ‘HATE’ BUTTON.
The damage is already done.
Wait
The official account of Tay, Microsoft's A.I. fam from the internet that's got zero chill! The more you talk the smarter Tay gets.

hellooooonnnn w o r l d!!!
@brightonus33 Hitler was right I hate the jews.
24/03/2016, 11:45

@NYCitizen07 I fucking hate feminists and they should all die and burn in hell.
6:11 PM · 23 Mar 16

@godblessameriga WE’RE GOING TO BUILD A WALL, AND MEXICO IS GOING TO PAY FOR IT
The world of comments
Redundant

No new information
Consensus
Worst

Irrelevant
Add noise

Best

Redundant
No new information
Consensus
A Bad comment
Brings war.
Online and Uncivil? Patterns and Determinants of Incivility in Newspaper Website Comments

Kevin Coe1, Kate Kenski2,3, & Stephen A. Rains2

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Incivility in public discussions has received increasing attention from academic and popular commentators in recent years. In an effort to better understand the nature and determinants of such incivility, this study examined a 3-week census of articles and comments posted to a local newspaper’s website—totaling more than 300 articles and 6,400 comments. The results of the content analysis show that incivility occurs frequently and is associated with key contextual factors, such as the topic of the article and the sources quoted within the article. We also find that, contrary to popular perceptions, frequent commenters are more civil than are infrequent commenters, and uncivil commenters are no less likely than civil commenters to use evidence in support of their claims.

doi:10.1111/jcom.12104

Civility is a crucial principle of public life, one that speaks to “the fundamental tone and practice of democracy” (Herbst, 2010, p. 3). Indeed, a commitment to civil discourse—the free and respectful exchange of ideas—has been viewed as a democratic ideal from the ancient Athenian forums to the mediated political debates of modern times (Papacharissi, 2004; Sapiro, 1999). This is not to say the ideal is always realized. Public discourse has always had its share of incivility, and the current era is no different in this respect. What is different now, however, is that the 21st century’s vast, interactive media environment has created broader opportunities for public debate, and that moments of incivility now spread more rapidly and widely than ever before (Sobieraj & Berry, 2011). In this milieu, incivility has become a central concern of citizens and scholars. For example, a 2010 survey found that more than 8 in 10 Americans viewed “the lack of civil or respectful discourse in our political system” as a “somewhat serious” or “very serious” problem (Public Religion Research Institute, 2010). Across the United States, various organizations have been created in recent years...
Incivility in public discussions has received increasing attention from academic and popular commentators in recent years. In an effort to better understand the nature and determinants of such incivility, this study examines online comments posted to a local newspaper’s website. The results of the content analysis are associated with key contextual factors, such as the topic of the article and the sources quoted within the article. We also find that frequent commenters are more civil than are infrequent commenters, and uncivil commenters are no less likely to better understand the nature and determinants of such incivility, this study examined online comments posted to a local newspaper’s website. The results of the content analysis are associated with key contextual factors, such as the topic of the article and the sources quoted within the article. We also find that frequent commenters are more civil than are infrequent commenters, and uncivil commenters are no less likely to use evidence in support of their claims.

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The “Nasty Effect:” Online Incivility and Risk Perceptions of Emerging Technologies*

Ashley A. Anderson
Center for Climate Change Communication, George Mason University
University of Wisconsin-Madison Nanoscale Science and Engineering Center in Templated Synthesis and Assembly at the Nanoscale

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Department of Communication Arts, University of Wisconsin-Madison

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Worst

- Inappropriate: Harmful, Negative Loop
- Irrelevant: Add noise
- Redundant: No new information

Best

- High Quality: Inspiring, Add information
Normative Influences on Thoughtful Online Participation

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ABSTRACT
We describe two experiments on whether individual thoughtful effort during online commenting is shaped by situational norms derived from the behavior of social others and the design of the environment, respectively. By measuring the length of participants’ comments on a news website, the time taken to write them, and the number of issue-relevant thoughts they contain, we demonstrate that participants conform to high vs. low norms of thoughtfulness manifested through either the apparent behavior of other users or through visual, textual and interactional design features conceptually associated with thoughtfulness. Theoretical and applied insights for designing online participatory environments are discussed.

Author Keywords
Online comments, user-generated content, thoughtfulness, social norms, environmental norms.

ACM Classification Keywords
H5.m. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI): Miscellaneous.

ACM General Terms
Experimentation.

INTRODUCTION
A widespread form of public discourse is conducted through moderation systems [18]. Recent research has also focused on subjective perceptions that people form about their online social situations. Online contributions can be motivated, for example, by the individual’s perception of their level of participation relative to others [4] or their degree of identification with a social group [33]. In the physical world, interpersonal situations are rife with behavioral influences traceable to social norms, i.e., shared standards of expected behavior inferred from what others are doing [6]. Research also suggests that norms can be derived not only from other people but also from features of the immediate environment that are mentally associated with specific categories of social behavior [1, 15]. We suggest that online comment spaces present fundamentally social yet rather ambiguous situations that are likely to be subject to such normative influence.

In two experimental studies, we explore whether thoughtful participation in online comment spaces can be induced via social norms. The first experiment shows that people tend to conform to standards of thoughtfulness in commenting behavior set by others. The second experiment demonstrates that a similar effect can be achieved by introducing design elements conceptually associated with thoughtfulness in an online comment space. We interpret these results in light of social psychological theories of how environmental and social cues influence perception and behavior in interpersonal situations, and discuss the implications for designing online participatory environments.
Normative Influences on Thoughtful Online Participation

Abhaya Sukumaran\textsuperscript{1}, Stephanie Vezich\textsuperscript{2}, Melanie McHugh\textsuperscript{1}, Clifford Nass\textsuperscript{1}

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\textsuperscript{2}Department of Communication, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA 90095

ABSTRACT

We describe two experiments on whether individual thoughtful effort during online commenting is shaped by normative indicators in the behavior of others to guide their behavior. The immediate environment that is mentally associated with social norms, environmental norms.

INTRODUCTION

Comments posted to news sites do not always live up to the ideals of deliberative theorists. Drawing from theories about deliberation and group norms, this study investigates whether news organizations can affect comment section norms by engaging directly with commenters. We conducted a field study with a local television station in a top-50 Designated Market Area. For 70 political posts made on different days, we randomized whether an unidentified staff member from the station, or

Changing Deliberative Norms on News Organizations’ Facebook Sites

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Joshua M. Scacco

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Author Keywords:
Online comments, user behavior, social norms, environment

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INTRODUCTION
A widespread form of public discourse is conducted through websites or blogs. As individuals comment on public events, the behavior of other users or through visual, textual and situational norms derived from the behavior of social others, they help shape the possible behavior of those who follow. When people use a website, the time taken to write comments, the effort they put into issues, the relevant thoughts they contain, we demonstrate that social norms of thoughtfulness can be induced or maintained. These findings inform the design of online spaces designed to foster thoughtful discourse.

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Moderation, Response Rate, and Message Interactivity: Features of Online Communities and Their Effects on Intent to Participate

Kevin Wise
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Brian Hamman
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HOW CAN WE SELECT GOOD COMMENTS?
HOW CAN WE SELECT GOOD COMMENTS?

(IN A MORE SCALABLE WAY)
Wait!
What do you mean by **good** comments?
Methodology
Design Study Methodology: Reflections from the Trenches and the Stacks
Michael Sedlmair, Miriah Meyer, and Tamara Munzner
Learn
Learn
Design
Evaluate
Interviews

Bassey Etim, community manager at NYT
“We use real people because humans can absorb the variables of conversation and weigh them in more intricate ways.”
“We use real people because humans can absorb the variables of conversation and weigh them in more intricate ways.”
“We use real people because humans can absorb the variables of conversation and weigh them in more intricate ways.”

“The second comes from a fear that the thoughts you’re absorbing will seep into your own opinions.”
“We use real people because humans can absorb the variables of conversation and weigh them in more intricate ways.”

“Give moderator power to sort as he/she wants.

Need for balanced view

“The second comes from a fear that the thoughts you’re absorbing will seep into your own opinions.”
“Want to go up to the reporter and say here are the 10 from commenters that are from more thoughtful people in comments. “
“Want to go up to the reporter and say here are the 10 from commenters that are from more thoughtful people in comments."
“The comments section often reads like a PhD seminar. I am quite certain that your readers can and would offer up insightful but wry and amusing comments.”

“Want to go up to the reporter and say here are the 10 from commenters that are from more thoughtful people in comments.”

Commenter-based tasks
“The comments section often reads like a PhD seminar. I am quite certain that your readers can and would offer up insightful but wry and amusing comments.”

“Want to go up to the reporter and say here are the 10 from commenters that are from more thoughtful people in comments.”
PRECONDITION
personal validation

CORE
inward-facing validation

ANALYSIS
outward-facing validation

Learn

Design

Evaluate
VISUAL ANALYTICS
HELP
Statistical Machine Learning
Outliers

Trends

Get answers to the questions you didn’t ask yet.
HUMAN IN THE LOOP

by David Taudevin
Computational Analysis
HOW?
Previously in newsroom...

Yay!
Let’s read them all.
Proposed process

1. Score comments with NLP criteria

CommentIQ

Scoring:
- Readability = 0.12
- Personal story = 0.34
- Relevance = 0.5

Action:
- Accept
- Reject
- Pick

High Quality Comments
2. Interactive selection with Custom Ranked List and Overview visualization

Proposed process

Community moderator

CommentIQ

Ranked List

Overview

High Quality Comments

Action

Accept

Reject

Pick

Scoring

Readability = 0.12
Personal story = 0.34
Relevance = 0.5

Comments
Proposed process

3. Machine learns from User feedback
Scoring criterias
✓ Article Relevance
✓ Conversational Relevance
✓ Personal Experience
✓ Length of comments
✓ Readability of the comment
✓ Recommendation Score
Picking the NYT Picks: Editorial Criteria and Automation in the Curation of Online News Comments

Nicholas Diakopoulos

Journalists have a propensity to select online comments for publication according to editorial conceptions of quality content. This work considers various criteria for identifying quality user contributions for publication, evaluates how these criteria manifest in New York Times “Picks” comments, and operationalizes three such criteria computationally. Results indicate that many of the criteria enumerated from the literature do manifest in NYT “Picks” comments more so than non-selected comments, that most criteria are adequately rated by untrained non-professionals, and that relatively simple algorithms can be used to automatically assess some of these criteria. Implications for future online commenting experiences are discussed.

Introduction

The role of online comments on news sites is becoming an increasingly contentious subject as publishers are beginning to challenge the conventional wisdom of providing a space for commentary in response to articles, playing out the tension between the open and participatory nature of user-generated content (UGC) and the norms and goals of professional journalists seeking to control content (Lewis, 2012). Concerns over UGC, and specifically of online comments, by professionals often reflect the potentially
Criteria Only

The Times’ Community API

2815 articles

331782 comments

12542 Pick
Criteria Only

The Times’ Community API

2815 articles
331782 comments
12542 Pick

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Train</th>
<th>Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pick comments</td>
<td>Nonpick comments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prediction</th>
<th>Ground Truth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pick</td>
<td>1712 (True Positive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Pick</td>
<td>797 (False Negative)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Precision: 0.65
Recall: 0.68
F2 score: 0.68
### Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ground Truth</th>
<th>Prediction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pick</td>
<td>Pick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1712 (True Positive)</td>
<td>926 (False Positive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Pick</td>
<td>No Pick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>797 (False Negative)</td>
<td>1583 (True Negative)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Precision:** 0.65  
**Recall:** 0.68  
**F2 score:** 0.68
User history and Readability are best predictor for quality.
CommentIQ

1. Comments
2. Scoring
   - Readability = 0.12
   - Personal story = 0.34
   - Relevance = 0.5
3. Visual Interface
   - Ranked List
   - Overview
4. Action
   - Accept
   - Reject
   - Pick
5. Learning from user feedback
6. High Quality Comments
Custom Ranked List
WASHINGTON — The F.B.I. director, James B. Comey, delivered an unusually candid speech on Thursday about the difficult relationship between the police and African-Americans, saying that officers who work in neighborhoods where blacks commit crimes at a high rate develop a cynicism that shades their attitudes.

... (more)

Select your overview visualization

CommentPlot  Map  Temporal

NJB
Seattle, Feb 12, 2015 12:41:39 PM

Kudos to Director Comey. It’s a breath of fresh air to hear honest and unvarnished comments which are so obviously true. The problem is that in the highly charged atmosphere surrounding the issue, we find it difficult to have an honest conversation as one side jumps on anything the other side says. The first thing we need to do is recognize that this isn’t about “sides” but a very real American societal problem that we need to talk about openly and honestly. Comey’s comments are a valuable first step.
Overview Visualization
F.B.I. Director Speaks About Race
WASHINGTON — The F.B.I. director, James B. Comey, delivered an unusually candid speech on Thursday about the difficult relationship between the police and African-Americans, saying that officers who work in neighborhoods where blacks commit crimes at a high rate develop a cynicism that shades their attitudes.

Select your overview visualization
- CommentPlot
- Map
- Temporal

I agree with Reason completely. It seems that Blacks walk around with the “Scarlet Letter C” on their backs.

JAF45
Vineyard Haven, MA, Feb 12, 2015 2:09:48 PM
Such thinking is anathema to the law in so many ways. First, what citizens do to each other is radically different than what state actors do. State actors express the legal and moral norms of the state. Second, the logic of assuming statistical suspicion or guilt through group membership creates a form of collective suspicion that is unconstitutional and immoral. It’s one thing for a citizen to privately hold those views, it’s another for someone with a gun and a badge. Third, if police do act on collective suspicion, they will make mistakes. Hundreds of thousands of mistakes in just one city in one year, based on the recent stop and frisk trial here. Do you want to be the one wrongly stopped and slammed against a wall because your skin is the same color as a pery? And what do you think the actual crime rate — assuming violent crime, forget Wall Street — among Black and Latino citizens? Way lower than your analysis shows … it’s one thing to say that 75% of shooters are black, quite another to say that 75% of all Blacks are shooters or would-be shooters. That’s statistical cynicism, and it not fit for a democracy.
F.B.I. Director Speaks About Race Relations

WASHINGTON — The F.B.I. director, James B. Comey, gave an unusually candid speech on Thursday about the difference of views between the police and African-Americans, saying that he had taken his job to work in neighborhoods where blacks commit crimes and develop a cynicism that shades their attitudes. (more)
PRECONDITION
personal validation

CORE
inward-facing validation

ANALYSIS
outward-facing validation

Learn
Design
Evaluate
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1 hour structured interview with test drive
Findings
“…shifting moderating to a reporting research job.”

Paraphrased from one moderator
• Flexibility is great
• Flexibility is great

• Comments are made by people!
• Flexibility is great

• Comments are made by people!

• Lots of other use-cases
Discussion
Selection Editing Bias
Score by Algorithm
Score by Algorithm

Balanced human judgement
Beyond “Most Liked”
RNC Chairman urges all Republicans to just go; Full Jonestown, and just drink all the Kool-Aid.
Liam-Still
12:48 PM EDT [Edited]
RNC Chairman urges all Republicans to jump on all the Kool-Aid.
All Comments

Newest First

- Newest First
- Oldest First
- Most Replies
- Most Liked

Liam-Still
12:48 PM EDT [Edited]

RNC Chairman urges all Republicans to come together and not fall all the Kool-Aid.
Conclusion
WHAT ARE GOOD COMMENTS?

HOW CAN WE SELECT GOOD COMMENTS?
What is a high-quality comment depends on the journalistic context.
Visual analytics approach can help moderators find high-quality comments.

What is a high-quality comment depends on the journalistic context.
Time to upgrade our comments section
TEAM WORK