Archiving scholarly tweets

**why?**

Twitter is a rapidly-growing service that lets people communicate in online messages of 140 characters or less.

Scholars are flocking to Twitter to cite peer-reviewed articles, to get feedback from other scholars, and to "live tweet" conference notes.

**methods**

To contact a diverse group of scholars on Twitter, we used a snowball sampling method: each new interviewee tweeted our recruitment message to her followers, gradually increasing the size of our potential sample.

We conducted 30- to 45-minute, semi-structured interviews with 28 participants to address whether they thought their tweets should be archived, and, if so, who should be responsible for archiving them.

**what to save?**

- **all**
  - Frank: We have to save as many as possible. But I'm just recognizing the difficulty of future PhD students 20 years from now, sifting through, trying to find the diamonds in the haystack.

- **some**
  - Brant: I don't even know if I would want to save all of it.

- **none**
  - Tammy: But as far as I'm concerned, from a utility point of view I don't see much value in saving old tweets anybody's old tweets.

- **some**
  - Carol: I wouldn't necessarily save tweets about what people are eating or recipes they're thinking about using.

**appraisal strategies**

**macroappraisal**

- **amanda**: This is what I have to say about this. My tweeting is done by me professionally, but it is not done by me as representative of my institution.

- **berk**: I assume Twitter wants to save them... that's the business model. The more information they have about anybody on their client list, the more money they can make.

- **tyrone**: Twitter is a private company, so someday they may decide to just erase all tweets. I am very concerned about that. So that is why sometimes I try to use a third party to archive my own tweets.

- **brian**: It seems safer to think that a government agency like the National Archives and Records Administration is not forthcoming; it is not an office that is not as influenced by politics as perhaps other branches. Having the Library of Congress archive it seems like a good idea.

**not home institution**

**Twitter**

**creator**

**government**

**who should archive?**

**before and after LoC announcement**

On Apr. 14, in the midst of our interviews, the Library of Congress announced that it would be archiving all public tweets. We noticed a distinct shift in participants' feelings after the announcement; they tended to view a complete archive more favorably, as shown on the timeline below.