

Measuring Self-Identity, and My Identity

Speaker

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Abstract

Social media platforms encourage users to provide short biographies or descriptions of themselves, providing a mechanism for self identity or to define how they represent themselves to others.

We have assembled a seven+ year longitudinal corpus observing how the self-descriptions of millions of people on Twitter change and evolve.

This provides a unique resource to study notions of self-identity.

I report on the general infrastructure behind this developing data resource, and the observations of social behavior that can be made using it:

- By studying user references to employment, we can document career progressions, and demonstrate that higher status jobs disproportionately become part of self-identity, more so than highly paid jobs.
- In the United States, there has been a steady trend towards increased expression of political identities, at the expense of religious identity.
- We measure the power of self-descriptions to predict user attributes, including which celebrities they are likely to follow.

