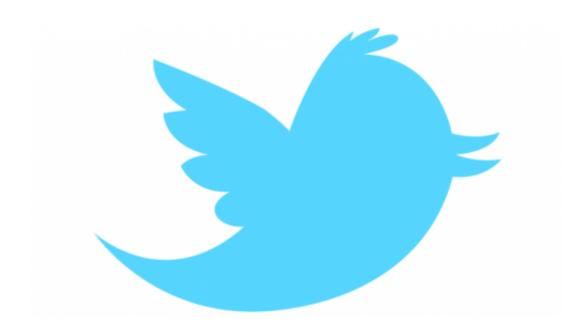# Australian team develops Twitter tool to gauge world's emotions

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Australian researchers unveiled on Tuesday a Twitter tool to map moods around the world in real-time to help improve the allocation of mental health services.

The online tool, called "We Feel", analyses up to 32,000 tweets per minute—about 10 percent of all English-language tweets—for 600 words that are then linked to emotions such as love, joy, surprise, anger, sadness and fear.

The data will be used to monitor the emotions of individuals and communities across different locations, and "ultimately predict when and where potentially life-saving services are required", said lead researcher Helen Christensen of Australia's Black Dog Institute, which researches and treats mood disorders such a depression.

"The power of this information cannot be underestimated. Currently, mental health researchers and associated public health programmes use population data that can be over five years old," the professor and director of the institute added.

The large volume of data from Twitter—which says it has 255 million monthly active users worldwide—is analysed with the support of Australia's peak science body, the CSIRO, and Internet giant Amazon's remote computing services.

The project currently only trawls through English-language tweets, is limited to Twitter and is hindered by the lack of data about the gender, identity and location of some users on the social media platform.

Despite these limitations, project researcher Bridianne O'Dea said the tool was the first opportunity to get a greater understanding of people who use the platform to tweet about their emotions.

"This demonstrates that we can monitor people over time, we can pick up trends, and now it's about validating this and see if these trends are indicative of what's really going on," said O'Dea, a post-doctoral research fellow at the Black Dog Institute.

"Now that we can collect data over time, we can do time comparisons and pretty much get a greater understanding of how people are using these technologies to express how they feel—because we don't know that yet. Nobody knows that yet."

The "We Feel" tool can be accessed at wefeel.csiro.au .

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