Negativity found to increase chances of Twitter posts going viral
14 April 2021, by Bob Yirka

A team of researchers from the SINAI Department of Computer Science, CEATIC and Universidad de Jaén has found that Twitter posts with negative sentiments are more likely to go viral than those that are more positive. In their paper published in the journal *Royal Society Open Science*, the group describes their analysis of Twitter posts during a politically emotional event in Spain—a referendum seeking to give Catalan independence back in 2017.

To find out if sentiment may play a role in virality in social media, the researchers choose a particularly divisive time in Spanish politics—the regional government of Catalan had begun a referendum that sought to give the region independence. The researchers collected 46,962 Tweets (posts on Twitter) from 25,847 different user accounts over one week in October, 2017. They then analyzed the tweets looking for trends regarding sentiment. In so doing, they found that users who posted tweets with a negative bent tended to reach a wider audience than did those who posted messages with more positive oriented messages. The researchers suggest that negative posts have greater virality than positive tweets, though they note that these findings may differ depending on circumstances, such as unique situations when someone posts a tweet that goes massively viral for no explainable reason.


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