

France, which suggests that more data was collected from French blogs than from any other.

Notes on the shaded areas:

A. Monitoring the ceremony on a “technological” level: The methods people used to follow the celebrations was a hugely discussed subject in the Francophone blogosphere, visible in the frequent use of words like image, blogs, facebook, videos, CNN, etc., and even words related to a discussion on China’s censorship of the ceremony on the Internet. I’m going to give a little shout out to Philippe Martin here, who, while chatting with us via twitter and Facebook, sent us a link to the definition of Web 3.0. Here it is: “If there is a moment that ushered in the era of Web 3.0, it might best be represented by President Obama’s Inauguration address in the United States on January 20th, 2009, an event experienced by millions in person and shared with many more millions of people simultaneously around the world.”

B. The “people” aspect of the ceremony: References to Jay-Z, Shakira, balls attended by Obama and his wife, the inauguration concert, Michelle’s gown... In my opinion, the prominence and content of this cluster really paints a picture of Obama’s newfound “star status”.

C. Team Obama and political organization: The names Clinton and Geithner both stand out in Team Obama discussions, but there are also several references to the name Kennedy (John and Caroline). The Bush-Obama transition sparked discussions on American political leaders in general, with the word “economy” figuring in the centre of the discussions, as well as “stimulus”, “plan”, etc. The economy appears to be the primary issue associated with Team Obama.

D. Foreign policy: If Obama’s team is associated with economic issues, Obama himself is associated with the following words, subjects considered to be “priorities”: Afghanistan, the Middle East, Gaza, peace, Guantanamo (prison, closure), Iraq, war, etc. It’s interesting that a large part of the discussion was devoted to the new president’s priorities from a foreign policy point of view. It was also interesting to see that the positive reaction of African countries (like Gabon) to Obama’s election is also in this political section, and not in the “after-ceremony” section.

E. Words with emotional connotations (pride, hope), as well as words that reflect peoples’ expectations (save, revive, promises, work), can be found in the immediate area surrounding the word “Obama”. You’ll also notice that the name “Bush” is extremely close to “Obama”, showing that Obama’s arrival is closely associated with Bush’s highly anticipated departure. The words in section E also echo the conclusions we came to in the last blog that analyzed tweets about Obama before he was sworn in.

What a Feeling! Montreal, Twitter and Obama

January 20th, 2009 – Caroline Allard

Claude and I had a bit of fun this morning extracting and analyzing info about Obama on Twitter, written in both English and French in the greater Montreal area (Montreal and the surrounding 25 km radius).

Let's take a look at the first 60 words associated with the word "Obama" taken from the 282 Montreal and area tweets written from January 16 up until this morning (this list was compiled by Exvisu's algorithm, which calculates the co-occurrence of words used in the tweets). I have also written a rough analysis following the list.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. barack | 21. wave | 41. assermentation |
| 2. inauguration | 22. gaza | 42. pics |
| 3. rt | 23. carbon | 43. good |
| 4. watch | 24. video | 44. offer |
| 5. president | 25. international | 45. président |
| 6. happy | 26. expectations | 46. comedy |
| 7. love | 27. commence | 47. portrait |
| 8. washington | 28. tomorrow | 48. world |
| 9. nouvelle(s) | 29. tv | 49. work |
| 10. bush | 30. espérer | 50. train |
| 11. speech | 31. official | 51. promesses |
| 12. arrivée | 32. cnn | 52. monde |
| 13. Montréal/Montreal | 33. war | 53. iphone |
| 14. live | 34. idea | 54. message |
| 15. history | 35. jointthewave | 55. cool |
| 16. vague | 36. feeling | 56. coverage |
| 17. blackberry | 37. generator | 57. martin |
| 18. américain | 38. twitter | 58. trêve |
| 19. investiture | 39. change | 59. declared |
| 20. people | 40. fun | 60. union |

Comments

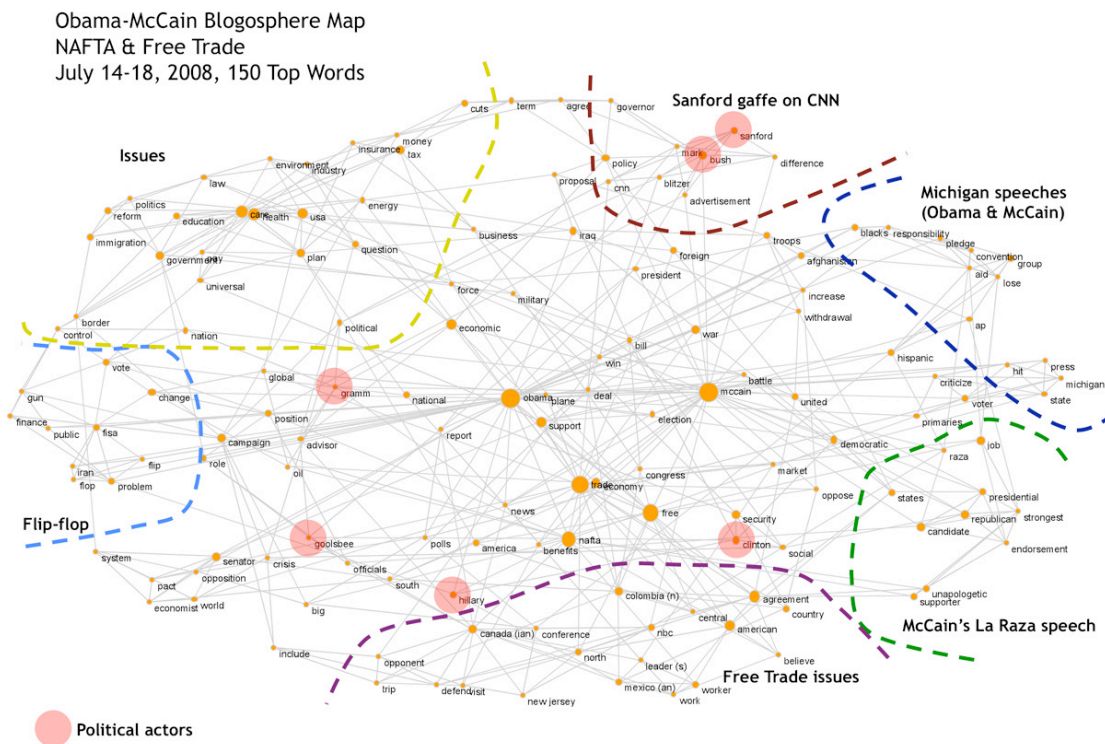
- Obviously, the first word associated with Obama is his first name, “Barack”. What’s surprising is that the word “Michelle” isn’t among the first 60 words associated with Obama. Coming in 122nd on the list, she definitely wasn’t a very widely discussed subject in the discourse about Obama’s inauguration.
- Two proper nouns associated with Obama in this list are Bush and Martin (Luther King). Bush is high on the list, coming in 10th place, which suggests that people view Obama as Bush’s replacement.
- Certain words refer to geography. Other than Washington (where Obama was sworn in) and Montreal (referencing inauguration activities planned in and around Montreal), we found the words “world” and “Gaza” (a word also associated with “cease-fire”). This reflects both Obama’s international impact in general as well as the expectations regarding current political problems.
- Many listed words are related to emotions or expectations: happy, love, change, fun, good, espérer, union (Americans), wave/vague, histoire [history], promesses, cool, expectations... Not only is Obama’s inauguration strongly associated with the political process (shown through the use of words like “assermentation” and “président”), but it’s equally, if not more, associated with emotions. In other words, this list shows that the change brought on by Obama is seen as both political and “spiritual”, in the sense that the general ambiance surrounding politics has changed. (Notice that the word “hope” doesn’t appear in English, while the French “espérer” does.)
- This list also shows the public’s interest in certain specific choices Obama makes in his day-to-day life: “portrait” references discussions about the fact that the presidential portrait was shot on a digital camera for the first time; “blackberry” refers to his decision to keep a blackberry; “carbon” could also be included in this category because of the Obama Carbon Calculator, even if this affects the choices of the people participating in the inauguration and not Obama’s.
- Looking at Twitterers’ interests in particular, they tend to discuss the technical methods people used to follow the inauguration: tv, cnn, live, twitter, vidéo, pics, nouvelles, iphone, etc. Notice that the word “Facebook” doesn’t come up in this list; it comes in 130th on the full word-association list.
- Interestingly enough, the term “RT” is placed very high on the list. During the last week, Montreal and area tweets about Obama are often retweets. Maybe they re-tweeted tweets on the subject posted by our neighbours to the south? We’ll have to check.
- Finally, the word “work) (in 49th place) refers to every good twitterer’s vice: “I should be working, but I’m too busy following what people are writing about the inauguration...” But I’m one to talk! ;-)

Blogs and elections: a look at Obama/McCain 2008

September 3rd, 2008 – Michael Boyle

With the US Political Convention season in full swing, we thought we'd present a short demonstration of how Exvisu's blogosphere analysis can shed light on the discourse related to political campaigns, candidates, and issues. In mid-July, we performed an analysis of the English blogosphere related to the upcoming US Presidential election. We focused specifically on Free Trade and NAFTA, which became a key issue during Primary season.

The following map was generated using a dataset including all blog posts (there were 946 total posts after filtering for spam) for a structured series of queries between July 14 and July 18. We then performed a lexical analysis that identified and mapped the relationship between the top 150 words in the dataset.



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Obama - McCain - NAFTA

Observations

- McCain and Obama are both located at the center of the map - which is to be expected, since these were used as keywords to establish the dataset. All of

the words on the map are arranged by their relationship to their nearest 5 other nodes (words), and the relative size of each node is directly proportional to its resonance in the dataset.

- When performing such an analysis, words that appear on the map tend to self-organize into clusters that define concepts that are important. In this case, there were 6 significant conceptual clusters related to important events of that week: Gov. Mark Sanford's gaffe in an interview on CNN; Michigan speeches by both Obama and McCain; McCain's speech at the La Raza Convention; issues related to free trade and trade agreements; the "flip-flop" question, and general political and social issues that are at play during the election season.
- In terms of positives for McCain during that week, the strong cluster related to his speech at La Raza is particularly interesting. In this speech, McCain was quoted as saying that he's an "unapologetic supporter" of free trade. "Unapologetic" and "supporter" are the words that connected this cluster with the general free trade cluster to its left (and this connection is largely responsible for their proximity on the map). That is not to say that this declaration is the only thing in play for McCain on this issue - as we read the blog posts that make up the free trade cluster, we noticed that the controversy surrounding McCain's trip to Ottawa in June was still very evident in the text.
- The other negative cluster related to McCain was related to Sanford's inability to distinguish specific ways that McCain's economic policy proposals differed from those of Bush in an interview with Wolf Blitzer on CNN. One of the important innovations of this kind of lexical analysis is that it allows us to identify which stories resonate the most in a given period of time, and the fact that a single story related to a single on-air interview by a McCain surrogate even appears on this graph demonstrates the influence that even a small problem can have once it's picked up in the blogs.
- It's also interesting to note the other individuals who appear among the top 150 words on the map. Other than Obama and McCain, we also see the following people: Hillary Clinton, Bill Clinton, Phil Gramm, Austan Goolsbee, and Sanford.
 - Gramm, the former McCain Campaign co-chair, was in the news due to his assertion that America had "become a nation of whiners" following which he resigned his position in the campaign. His name is directly connected to the words "nation," "political," "economic," and "advisor."
 - Austan Goolsbee is Obama's key economic advisor and appears because he is widely cited by bloggers that take a close look at Obama's

economic and trade policies.

- The fact that both Clintons appear among the top 150 words in the map is an indication of the importance they still wield related to this year's election cycle.
- The last cluster to note is related to the "flip-flop" question. This is a relatively small cluster but contains words directly related to Obama including "fisa" and "public finance." At the time of this analysis, this question was still very much alive.