



When do tweeters tweet about science?

Exploratory analysis of the Twitter dissemination of scientific publications by weekdays and months

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OBJECTIVES

Following the general research question “When do tweeters tweet about scientific publications?”, this study had two particular objectives in mind:

- What does the timely distribution of scientific publications on Twitter look like? – For this, shares per days of the week and months of the year were of particular interest.
- Do differing geographical backgrounds of tweeters change the timely pattern observed?



DATA

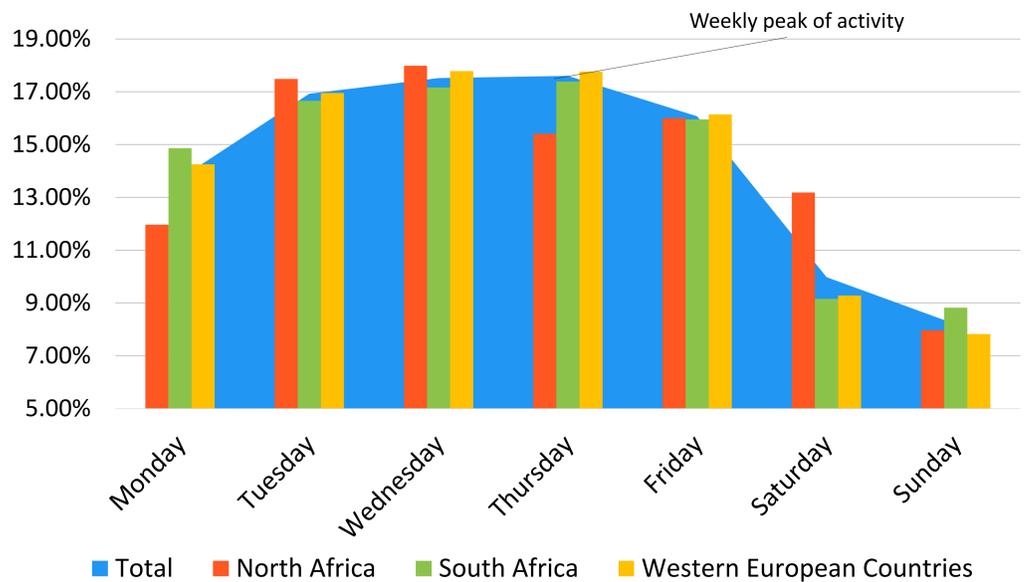
Tweets originated from Altmetric.com:

- Timespan: January 2012 to December 2016
- 25,227,143 tweets in final result set, referring to 3,342,891 distinct scientific publications (publication years 2012 onwards).

Three different geographical subsets for tweeters:

- *Western European Countries*: Great Britain, the Netherlands, Spain
- *North Africa*: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt
- *South Africa*

Twitter activity over days of the week



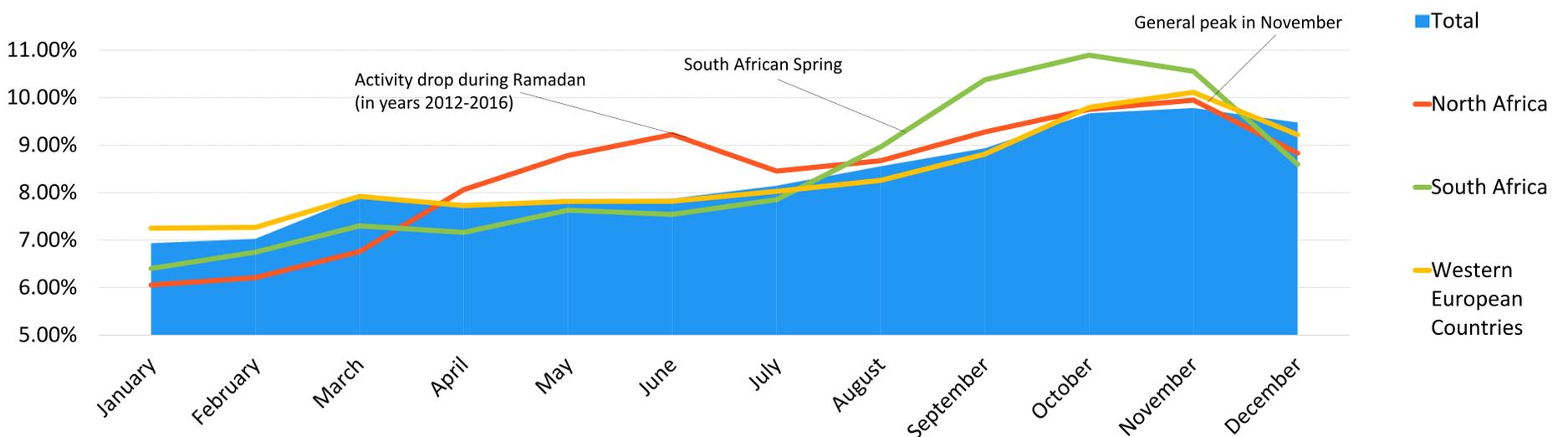
CONCLUSIONS

- General timely tweeting habit reflects “Western pattern”.
- In regard to timeliness, tweeting activity appears to be affected by underlying cultural backgrounds resp. geographical conditions. Namely, we are observing a drop of tweeting activity in North Africa during the Ramadan months, and a less balanced pattern of activity for South Africa as compared to the other regions observed. The latter may be affected by a different seasonal cycle.

Open for further empirical inquiry, an important next question will be:

- Does it matter when a publication is (first) tweeted? – Are there optimal time windows for a publication to be disseminated on Twitter?

Twitter activity over months of the year



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