



SMART VISUALIZATION: WILL SOCIAL MEDIA YIELD FINANCIAL RESULTS?

by Guillermo Kopp

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In the manifold space of social media, freewheeling messages spread virally. Beyond promoting their brands, will financial firms tap this emerging channel to generate revenue? Amid a marathon of electronic transactions, will the financial sector curb down online fraud amounting to billions of US dollars? The race is heating up, as highlighted by some recent examples: To help businesses combat online crime, IBM has just acquired i2, a company that specializes in software platforms which process social network analytics for the intelligence community. Navigating complex flows will require visual tools. To spot fraud patterns, startup company Synerscope employs an innovative visualization interface which builds on research from Eindhoven University of Technology. These examples, and other novel technologies, may link fuzzy online interactions to quantifiable financial results.

1. **Interaction power:** *Global Transaction Services, a B2B arm of Citibank, is actively harnessing its social media presence in its target market and expects to find some return on such investment.*

→ **Actions:** Financial firms must harvest professional as well as personal interactions and relationships within social media. The collective wisdom of clients, employees and the public, and also multimedia, location data, and other device-specific features will augment the service value.

2. **Social media analytics:** *SAS and other providers of analytics software have deployed “listening platforms” to interpret social media conversations that reference contextual structures.*

→ **Actions:** Besides minding business semantics, analytics must digest unstructured data and real-time intelligence. Firms should instantly gauge subtle swings in sentiment or online patterns, weigh relationship factors in social networks, pinpoint the causes, and act upon opportunities or threats.

3. **Visualization:** *A color picture is worth a million words. Interactive visuals will allow firms to spot sources of unusual activity among millions of relationships, devices, and financial transactions.*

→ **Actions:** Online flows between networked relationships will continually change hierarchies and structures. Social media analytics should employ intuitive, smart graphic objects that zoom in on online entities and events, analyze the sequence and speed of change, and adapt to the situation at hand.

4. **Social network objects:** *Graphs depict complex links between people and online traffic. Online networks track various measures of “centrality” that indicate the relevance of each participant.*

→ **Actions:** Interactions must be analyzed at successive levels of detail and filtered by location, time, and other relevant transaction variables. Firms should utilize intuitive maps or self-adjusting radial views to reveal significant affinities between interconnected participants.

5. **Social media metrics:** *Financial firms must turn widespread online monitoring efforts into productive outcomes, such as linking customer engagement with revenues or removing fraud sources on the spot.*

→ **Actions:** Firms must identify those interactions (such as buying intentions or cyber attacks) that represent relevant business events. Deep analysis of network behavior will point to the “central” parties, thresholds, and triggers of such events and yield quantitative measurements of their impact.