Preface

If social media started in the late 1990s and early 2000s, we are now some 18 years into the Web 2.0 phenomenon. In this time, there have been a lot of takers, and a global electronic culture has emerged. Users, globally, have been posting status updates through microblogging messages, short messaging services, and social networking wall posts. They have been labeling their messages and online resources with tags. They have been #hashtagging their microblogged messages and liberally using keywords, and many of these are new words created on-the-fly (word mash-ups and new creations, if you will). Virtually everyone has learned how to strike a pose towards the business end of selfie sticks and to create attention-worthy spectacles. There are a rich variety of “go fund me” efforts online. Social media platforms are up-tempo spaces where people go to see and be seen; where people perform socially to audiences—both real and imagined. (People are sensitive to the realization that they are observed and will changed their behaviors.) There is profligate oversharing on food, friends, travel, and dating, in competitions for social approval and fame. Online is a space leavened by the human imagination and games of pretense. Online is a virtual social playground and collaboration space for the world’s youth and adults. For most, it is “TMI” (too much information).

The overflow of amateur-created work has sometimes put the pros out-of-business or dropped the bottoms out of pro work, whether in journalism or entertainment or porn. Online, there are groups and individuals advocating for social and political changes for, if not some conceptualized utopias, at least some betterment. Messages are shaped to activate people to action, and the respondents are the savvy and the gullible. Many are working to create online norms against trolling, fraud, and advantage-taking, and to make the online spaces safer. It’s a mix of signals and mixed signals. Collectively and individually, people form understandings of each other through electronically mediated ways. Social media platforms are a little like “stone soup” concoctions: people need to bring their own ingredients, and the resulting mix is sometimes a savory one.

Users have been going short—short texts, short videos (think Vines), and quick image captures—and moving on. The messages and contents are narrow-casted to friends and others with like-minded interests but also often simultaneously broadcast to anyone who cares to follow, observe, and engage. The argument is that with digital contents, the sharing will be non-rivalrous. There is no actual limit to the sharing as long as a commercial site is willing to host the contents and enable others to access it. Human largesse and goodwill do not have a cost except in the initial investment to build the particular digital good; thereafter, it can be consumed any number of ways and exist part of a digital record into digital eternity. Maintaining communications with a small group of friends will be the same as maintaining that of a large followership with the electronic affordances.
SOME EMPIRICAL RESEARCH-BASED INSIGHTS

At first blush, sharing on a planetary or global scale still inspires awe. Over time, even as one’s eyes adjust, this is all still astounding, but other observations also come to the fore. While the “world” is participating online, there are actual and real limits. For those engaged in various research topics, there can be limited sources for certain types of information or only a few trustworthy sources. On many topics, there is silence—no sharing. For many crowd-sourced projects, the general dynamic still is in the rabid support of a few and mass free-riding from others. In a global possible pool of contributors, few select in to volunteer—especially as real-world costs for skills, hard (or boring) work, and investments mount. Enthusiasms and skills carry contributors a way, and then interests wane, or relationships break, and there is a fast drop-off of contributions. Those who work in open-source do burn out because users of their resources have needs for support and for updates of the tools and resources. It gets harder for those who provision resources for free to continue in goodwill. In the few anomalous crowd-sourcing projects that have been accepted as broad successes, like Wikipedia, the developer base of those who maintain the core of this are fairly well funded (albeit as a non-profit organization), the contributors well supported with an annual conference, and the endeavor underpinned by a powerful open-source technology and also friendly robots that help present a potent information space. In this space, Wikipedia stands out…in part because of the rarity of effective continuing crowd-sourced resources. For massive open online courses, at least in the early generations, they would attract many potential learners, but a majority would not make it past the first log-in, and in terms of those that actually finished, these would be in the low single digits as a percentage of the mass that first enrolled. Follow-through or stick-to-it-iveness is often wanting.

So much social information is now available in the Internet wilds, and the sharing continues at a rollicking pace. At global scale, in the vernacular, the Internet responds; it thinks; it emits; it sparks and runs; it breaks. There are mass-scale emotive reactions. There are debates over “the dress” and its colors, and other trivialities. It’s all spectacle. And then there’s the near-constant sousveillance, with mobile phone videos and stills of observed events, often as they unfold.

In the meantime, researchers have surfaced some insights into online human sociality. Online, everything is the “court of public opinion,” and for years now, researchers have been tapping those spaces for sentiment. For all the affordances of mediated connectivity, there are real limits to human sociality, a kind of Dunbar number limit. It does take real effort to build and maintain relationships in every context. To usurp Charles de Gaulle’s famous quote about nation-states, in one sense, people really have no friends online, only interests. When those interests wane, the weak links break.

Online, the follower-following dynamic does apply, with the masses engaged in following a few and the few not reciprocating followership but having an outsized influence on the many (who often engage in one-sided parasocial relationships). While unreciprocated one-way relationships may be unsustainable, oftentimes, in dyadic contexts, they seem to maintain well over time in various types of fandom; it may be that people want to live in certain imaginary or pretend connections with others. The Pareto principle seems to apply to social media platforms, with a minority few creating a majority of the contents and the others consuming the goods mostly passively as lurkers.

In the 1990s, online spaces were conceptualized as those for people experimenting and exploring, coming into their own identities, no matter what those might look like; it was a space for the imagination. Back then, it was thought that people could explore in full anonymity; it was thought that pseudonymity could be maintained over time. For many social sharers, there was not the conceptualization of an
electronic record that would remain in the practical forever. There was not the sense that a deletion was not a real hard deletion, with complete erasure of records. Now, with the revelations of Edward Snowden and others, it is clear that most of what happens online—whether on the Surface Web or Deep Web, it is all quite knowable and explorable. The access is not only for those with high-end access and super technology skills but mainline academic researchers. There is plenty to interpret online already even if it were only on the level of explicit messaging. Researchers have evolved a number of ways to study and access pattern data that is less obvious or hidden. For example, they have created sophisticated stylometric analyses techniques to identify authorship based on hidden metrics (such as parts-of-speech counts). Online forensic investigations turn on when accounts were made, the account handles used, what information was shared, and how; all it would take for a person wanting to remain anonymous or pseudonymous over time would be one small slip-up. Network analysis enabled the capture of trace data to look at human relating. There are machine learning approaches to tap mass data and to extract hidden patterns (often not otherwise findable).

In the attention economy, there is huge competition for “shares,” “likes,” “favorites,” “upvotes,” and hotness measures; followers, and “friends.” In that light, people have gone online to game socially, sharing their gaming talents with varied guilds and engaging with other players globally. On professional social networks, they share their professional and educational data and work-based slideshows, publications, and presentation videos. On social networking sites, they socialize. On dating sites, they spark, burn out, and more often than not, dim out. In 3D immersive virtual worlds, they create avatars and engage with virtual environments and each other and automated robots. They collaborate around fund-raising, tagging online contents, co-creating encyclopedias and publications, building and sharing digital learning objects, and co-teaching and co-learning through free online courses. On content sharing sites, they engage in special interest groups. Through electronic connectivity, something like global culture has spawned. It is said that everyone can find their own community, no matter how small it is on the long tail. If people prefer the company of others like themselves (homophily), then it may be said that people self-select into certain groups based on self-interests and objectives.

With so much socializing, it seems inevitable that marketplaces of conveniences also form. Many have gone online to create hand-made goods for broad sale and online reputations built up over time based on the various interactions they’ve had with others on the site. In a sense, electronic social affordances have changed up the calculus of human expectations, with many subscribing to swift trust enabled by third-party sites that hold reputations in escrow. Here, people are engaging in sharing economies, inviting rent-paying strangers into their cars and homes. The boundaries of the electronic marketplace have moved well into people’s homes and what might have been thought of as private spaces.

Throughout, there have been small voices emphasizing security. With data, you are always giving away more than you intend—through data leakage and slippage. Those who are practiced in inference attacks can read-back data and read information—like age, gender, culture, personality, intellect, education level, and then some. Even if people cannot see your content data, they can capture your trace and metadata: who you are engaging with, when you are sharing, and often where you are sharing from (geolocation data). Unless pseudonyms are created in a randomized way, they can be interpreted and read-back as well, with varying levels of inferential accuracy.
DATAFICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA DATA

All this interacting and broad sharing through web-accessible platforms means that there is a lot of available (albeit noisy) data for research and analysis: content data (messaging, articles, images, videos, and others); trace data (log and interaction data); and metadata (data describing data). On a surface level, this data seems highly unstructured. After all, it includes string or text data, imagery, multimedia, and URLs. However, with various types of data scraping and data extraction methods, the data may be categorized into data tables and treated as semi-structured and structured data. Different types of information may be extracted in different ways based on the social media platform and its technological affordances.

In a typical dataset from Twitter, for example, there are columns for user account names, the micrologging message (Tweet), date information, time information, geolocational data, scraped imagery, and so on. Data may be extracted based on certain keywords, hashtags, physical locations, profile Tweetstreams, and other methods. On Wikipedia, which is built on the open-source MediaWiki understructure, its contents may be captured in various ways: articles, article networks, author page networks, edit networks, and other data. And so forth.

On a very superficial level, information shared on social media platforms is lightweight. The information is about people in their respective contexts sharing information with friends and colleagues and maybe the larger publics. Intentions are pretty easy to discern, and it is possible to maybe read some personality into what is shared. The informational value for outsiders may be minimal.

From an applied research perspective, the informational value of social media data tends to be in the aggregate insights: the trends, the public conversations being held, the shared events, the geographically-based occurrences, cultural features, and so forth. If learning from social media is a narrative, the data scientist is striving to enable writing with millions of voices from the perspective of an omniscient narrator. Social media data are at once both subjective and objective. The first draft of history is not achieved through journalism but is in the hands of people who share their moment-by-moment insights and who collectively have described their world at any slice-in-time. The dynamic reading of #hashtagged conversations, Tweetstreams, posting walls, may be achieved with computerized “distant reading,” which enables the capture of summary data and trends. To be clear, the same technologies enable viewing not only at the 30,000 foot level but zooming in to the level of an individual node (ego) and the level of a single voice, a single dyadic pair and their electronic interchanges, a three-some in a three-way short messaging interchange, or a cluster of actors engaging around an obscure topic.

The data are already in electronic format. With various tools, accessing the data results in minimal effort, with application programming interfaces (APIs), web browser add-ons, and command-line capabilities in programming languages (many with packages that enable various text-based analytics). There is a pursuit of hidden patterning in the data—what is latent or non-obvious—beyond intended revelations. What may be understood from social media data depends on the questions asked (or the discovery approach), the data extraction tools and methods used, the application of analytical processes (and tools), and the sophistication of the researchers. Some common analytical approaches include natural language processing, geolocational data processing, geoprocessing, network analysis, sentiment analysis, time-based analyses, content mapping, and others. Various types of machine learning applications may be applied to social media data in order to extract patterns and create models; these models come with validation methods.
Instead of speculating on what others are thinking, it is actually possible to tap empirical data to see what is being expressed (by at least part of the population). It is possible to explore breaking events and issues to see what is trending and who is participating in various conversations. It is possible to see into people’s profiles and their ego neighborhoods and networks. It is possible to explore geographically-based phenomena as well as those of certain tribes and people groups. For those more used to traditional research methods, the datasets from social media tend to be a lot bigger than typical, and often, it is much easier to acquire the data. There is often a strong discovery element to such data—because there are revelatory insights, even for aspects that were not necessarily considered.

And yet, for all the data bounty, there is also the sense that access to data is constantly changing. Those who run social media platforms do not constantly enable access through their application programming interfaces (APIs); rather, the terms of access and use do change. There is the sense that those who control the data have better things to do with it than to give it away for free (back to those who actually contributed the original data). Also, the intermediary tools used to access data can be quite limited and limiting based on pre-set data extraction parameters and other tool features. To scrape an N of all from planet-scale social media, researchers would generally have to go with a commercial entity that enables full access to social media data and have a way to engage big data (with the necessary training, the proper data handling software, and access to cloud-based data). They also have to be comfortable with abstracted data in different data formats.

Computer science researchers have made impressive headway in areas of machine vision, and there are companies offering services to machine-sort imagery (with machine learning tools trained on the Web corpus of imagery). These technologies are still quite cutting edge and have not been fully integrated into the toolkits of contemporary researchers.

OPEN CHALLENGES

So what are “open challenges” in social media data extractions and content analysis? If I were to speculate, the list would include the following:

First, there is constant surveillance over what the next big popular social application may be and what its features are and how people might engage that application in their daily lives. Next-generation social media platforms may well be built into the Internet of Things (IoT) and hidden in the physical environment and encapsulated in apparent simplicity. The social ecosystem is in constant motion, and changes are the norm. The next game changers are likely already being conceptualized and built.

Second, there is constant work on advancing computational analytics. As-is, there are technologies for “distant reading” of small-to-large text corpora. There are ways to extract sentiment, emotion, and valence from texts. There are ways to read and interpret the personality of writers using computational means. There are ways to map “http networks” to understand web page ties and relationships. There are ways to map social networks within and across platforms. Geolocational data may be plumbed to understand the physical locational aspects of social media interactions. There are ways to anticipate people’s physical locations in the future (with a high degree of confidence), based on a sufficient amount of underlying locational data. There are ways to plumb the Dark Web for virtually all the same insights as the Surface Web. Of late, there have been rich advancements in data visualization to communicate complex and large-scale data and data changes over time. All the prior may be done dynamically on newly created data in real-time. On the cutting edge is machine vision (such as object recognition, facial recognition,
context recognition, and others) and image analytics on-the-fly. There is work also on video analytics on-the-fly. There is a need for easier ways to conduct analyses cross-lingually. In the years since social media has popularized, there have many methods developed to fuse data from disparate sources and to plumb that data for otherwise-latent insights. Indeed, there is nascent progress to expand knowability on a variety of technological fronts based on commercial and security needs. On the long tail is work on applications to particular domains and unique research cases.

Third, there will be continuing efforts to bring research and analytical methods to researchers. There is not only the push for new ways of datafying and analyzing social media data but also endeavors to make it easier and lower-cost for researchers to analyze social media data. Using “big data” to understand consumers and the broad public has been de rigueur in industry, but big data analyses are still not that common in academia. Machine learning has been enabled for years, but that also has been slow to be accepted by academic researchers (even though these capabilities have been integrated into software analytics packages for years). Acceptance of computational methods in academic fields will require leadership, funding, advocacy, validated research and analytics methods, and potent research cases and exemplars. There will have to be work training up researchers in new methods and technologies. Concomitant with this methods work will be advancements in theory and modeling, which enable academic research work to advance.

Fourth, there are people groups joining social media and others leaving—in a constant churn. Still, even today, according to one application of the diffusion of innovations model, there are still many of the “late majority” and “laggards” coming online and joining social media, especially as technological infrastructures are put into place and mobile devices become more capable in various regions of the world. As others come online and engage socially, many research insights may be attainable. (Of course, at the same time, there are others who are exiting social media and going through temporary or even permanent “digital detox”. Still others have never gotten on board to begin with because of the common truism that when social media services are free, what they are selling is their users’ data and access to the users—for advertisers. People who do not want their private selves to be bought and sold and used for commercial ends choose to remain socially inert or non-present on social media platforms. A social media platform is only as good as its current verified users, in a sense.)

Certainly, there are other open challenges in social media data extractions and content analysis. The above four are general areas as I see it: the next-gen social media applications, advancing computational analytics, the expansion of research and analytical methods to researchers in a range of fields, and the changing populations using social media (and what they each bring).

GETTING TO “YES” WITH BOOK CONTRIBUTORS

Some of my colleagues speak dreamily of research, writing, editing, and publishing. The script that they are running often has something to do with fame and fortune, which are life aspects which are rarely factually associated with this work. For some of them, there is still a mystique to the process. Take it from me: if there is fear when facing a blank page, facing an unfilled text without any pages as-yet defined is multiply “frightening”.

After coming up with the initial inspiration for an edited text, what is actually required is just plain doggedness. Initially, an editor works to recruit talent through as many channels as possible. Not all gatekeepers are necessarily willing to offer access to their electronic mailing lists or email networks.
or other electronic venues. The call for chapter proposals is scattershot. Online word-of-mouth can be pretty iffy. The targeting itself is fairly imprecise because the book topic on social media research draws those from a range of educational and professional backgrounds.

A call for chapter proposals temporarily focuses time for those few working in a particular area of a field to achieve the works that ultimately make it into the book. I think of this as a kind of extended “moment” when particular interests align and commitments to the work are made. The book development cycle proceeds during a year. A year is rarely sufficient for researchers to fully acquire new skill sets and technologies, and re-conceptualizing statistical applications, are hard endeavors. There are substantial real-world challenges to understanding how to use software tools to “read” texts (think stopwords lists, regular expressions, matrix queries, and data visualizations) and “interpret” imagery. The harnessing of computational methods to understanding social media is seen as potentially up-ending long-practiced analytical processes and so is not without controversy.

Not only do they have to be pre-positioned for the work, the researchers and writers first have to be willing to invest that much of their efforts and “head space” into the research. Ultimately, contributors have to self-select into a book project; they cannot be charmed or talked into one because the work itself is simply too demanding.

Research and writing are hard work that draw a few. The work cycle for a chapter, roughly, goes something like this: inspiration, a thorough review of the literature, research design, conduct of the research, data analytics, data visualizations, writing, revision, re-review of the literature, submittal, peer review, revision, and finalization. If the work is being achieved by a team, there is the additional layer of work involving coordination—a complex social dance of high expectations, cross-field expertise, and mutual accommodation. Regardless, there are many sacrifices to make the space to actually execute on the work.

Then, too, besides investing in the hard work, all sides have to work on the shared trust. It does not take more than one misstep or wrong messaging to break that trust. Even if all sides start out with good will and a respect for each other’s public reputations, it’s in the interactions that collaborations are made or broken. In this text, two chapters did not make because of broken trust. Trust is a two-way relational phenomenon, and in some cases, it is ephemeral. Publishing is about convergence of shared interests around a particular project, and in the fragile year leading up to the finalization of a work, that trust has to be built and cultivated; it has to be maintained into a practical foreseeable future as well (professional worlds are small).

Some publications use their posted rejection rate as a metric for the value of a publication. The harder it is to have a work accepted for publication, the more elite and selective a publication may be. That is not my intention here. Ideally, in every context, every potential author and authoring team would have a fair hearing and fair judgment through double-blind peer review. Not all works get to that stage of an actual submitted draft chapter. For this work, a half-dozen would-be contributors had works that did not make it through the process. For two teams, their chapter drafts were mere summaries of the research literature with no original primary research, and neither was able to recover when they received that feedback. One of the more counterintuitive messages to authors is that their local knowledge is critical to the value and uniqueness of their work. It is interesting to identify wide gulfs in thinking across different spaces. So often, researchers do not see the value in what they know intimately because such details are
normal and mundane to them. If outside research is to be summarized, as these two teams chose, then there still has to be something else in the work that is original—such as the creation of a new model or the application of the research to a local setting.

One potential author self-selected out and retracted his approved chapter when he did not like the anonymized draft chapter he was to peer-critique. He erroneously suggested that the author of that work had plagiarized based on running the text through an anti-plagiarism tool and not actually apparently reading the work. He also seemed frustrated that he would only be receiving one complimentary copy of the published text, and he wanted more recognition and reward for his work. (All first-author contributors receive one complimentary copy of the published text, nothing more. This is why, as an editor, I am hoping that the contributors acquire other benefits from their work, such as professional advancement and professional recognition.) While it can be annoying when potential authors self-select out of a project, it is a healthy sign of the field where researchers and authors advocate for themselves and their own interests and that they have a wide range of potential publishers they may access to help polish and present their work to the world.

Another work was declined when the contributor made it clear that she would not abide by the strictures of the publishing contract. She did not like the terms of the contract, and she wanted to create derivative (read: self-plagiarised) works from her research. That chapter did not make it into the peer review process. Several others did not complete their work in time. Ultimately, people self-select in or out; they follow through, or they do not; they choose one project or another. And after a number of book projects, I think there should be no offense taken if a work does not make for a particular project. Sometimes, the “fit” is simply not there, and no one should feel the worse for it. Maybe next time. Still, it is helpful to conduct a “traceback” and review how things may be done better next time to be still more inclusive while upholding tough standards.

Interestingly, in one of the email exchanges with a potential author, he asked if I reviewed the chapters directly. Of course. I read the contributors’ chapters multiple times, even before I send it out in anonymized format for double-blind peer review. I do provide feedback to the authors and authoring teams. I also read all reviews and make sure that those are shared appropriately with the authors. I see my role as shepherding a work through the peer editing and publishing process. While I have my own standards, I am conscious of the importance of protecting and respecting author freedom and voice. I understand that feedback has to be constructive and not harmful to the authors’ confidence. The idea is to support the authors’ highest and best, and what that looks like differs.

While much research is occurring on social media, much of it is proprietary and protected by corporations (as it should be in those contexts). A lot of work is on-going without documentation for public consumption. Most publications in this area seem to be coming from academia, with a few from corporate research labs.

**INITIAL AMBITIONS FOR THE TEXT**

In the original conceptualization, it was hoped that *Social Media Data Extraction and Content Analysis* would include works that encompassed research not only on the Surface Web but also the Deep (Hidden) Web and maybe even the Dark Web. Also, there were expectations that there could be broad inclusion of a wide range of social media platforms and the introduction of a wide range of technologies and research methods for data extractions and analytics. The general concept is to not artificially limit the
possibilities by thinking in too small, but to conceptualize broadly and to let the real world limitations determine the ultimate Table of Contents (TOC).

When I say that editing is an emergent process, I mean that it involves a lot of ambiguity. One has to make a certain amount of progress before the next considered decisions are made and the proper steps taken. This is especially so for determining the ultimate contents of a text. As such, the TOC is set up in four sections.

Section 1: Modeling with Social Data
Section 2: Analytics from the Online Crowd
Section 3: Tapping Specific Social Media Platforms
Section 4: Applied Uses of Social Media Data for Awareness and Problem-Solving

SECTION 1: MODELING WITH SOCIAL DATA

Jonathan Bishop’s “Devising Parametric User Models for Processing and Analysing Social Media Data to Influence User Behaviour: Using Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of Social Media Data” (Ch. 1) thoughtfully argues for using a range of theoretically informed and practical methods for studying social media data. Drs. Eric Gilbert Poitras and Negar Fazeli Dehkordi describe the application of the intelligent nBrowser to enhancing the work of teacher professional development, in “Mining the Edublogosphere: Towards Modeling Networks of Online Resources to Enhance Teacher Professional Development” (Ch. 2). This work stands to advance education through the harnessing of relevant socially mediated educational contents across a range of online platforms. In a theoretically important work, Drs. Davide Di Fatta, Roberto Musotto, Vittorio D’Aleo, Walter Vesperi, Giacomo Morabito, and Salvatore Lo Bue argue that network analysis is especially relevant in terms of the global Internet economy, in “Weak Ties and Value of a Network in the New Internet Economy” (Ch. 3). Dr. Duygu Mutlu-Bayraktar, in “Usability Evaluation of Social Media Web Sites and Applications via Eye-Tracking Method” (Ch. 4), takes a human usability approach in evaluating social media sites based on eye-tracking.

SECTION 2: ANALYTICS FROM THE ONLINE CROWD

The second section, “Analytics from the Online Crowd,” focuses on the phenomenon of “crowd-sourcing,” or reaching out to the people connecting online to collaboratively address interests and issues. Drs. Marlene Goncalves, Patrick Rengifo, Daniela Andreina Rodriguez, and Ivette C. Martinez, in “A Route Recommender System Based on Current and Historical Crowdsourcing” (Ch. 5) describes a clever approach to use Twitter information for traffic awareness between any two geographical points in Caracas, Venezuela. In Chapter 6, Drs. Antonia Estrella-Ramón and Alba Utrera-Serrano describe a content analysis approach to exploring and understanding “Customer Complaints in Social Networks in the Spanish Telecommunication Industry: An Analysis using the ‘Critizen’”; this is a work about enhancing business-based decision-making. With the outpouring of so much digital data shared through social media platforms and the Social Web, software developers have been extending capabilities for “distant reading,” or using machines to extract meaning from text. Dr. Shalin Hai-Jew’s “Applied Analytical ‘Distant Reading’ using NVivo 11 Plus” (Ch. 7) explores some of the distant reading capabilities of a
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widely used qualitative data analytics tool. The last chapter of this section describes a sentiment analysis feature and its applications for research. “Sentiment Analysis and Post-Sentiment Data Exploration through Automated Means” (Ch. 8), by Hai-Jew, describes the ways that “sentiment” in textual corpora may be understood computationally and applied to research.

SECTION 3: TAPPING SPECIFIC SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

In Section 3, “Tapping Specific Social Media Platforms,” the chapters highlight some of the types of information that may be extracted from various social platforms and how such data may be used for various purposes. The platforms include social networking platforms, content-sharing sites, microblogging platforms, and others. Chapter 9, “Exploring ‘User,’ ‘Video,’ and (Pseudo) Multi-Mode Networks on YouTube with NodeXL,” describes the drawing of various social and content networks from Google’s YouTube using a freeware tool (NodeXL Basic). The fact that the same graphs can no longer be extracted with the same tool highlights the constantly changing levels of access to social media platform data and the sense that researchers must seize the moments which are ephemeral and fast-moving. “Flickering Emotions: Feeling-based Associations from Related Tags Networks based on Flickr Contents” (Ch. 10) is a multi-layered work. Based on Robert Plutchik’s “Wheel of Emotions” model, the author captures related tags networks and related thumbnail imagery from Flickr in order to explore a more diffracted sense of what those emotions mean as described in tagging (based on socially shared imagery). In “Creating “(Social) Network Art” with NodeXL” (Ch. 11), Shalin Hai-Jew displays a sense of experimentation and whimsy in using social media platform data to draw various graphs in artistic ways with aesthetic appeal.

SECTION 4: APPLIED USES OF SOCIAL MEDIA DATA FOR AWARENESS AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

This final section, “Applied Uses of Social Media Data for Awareness and Problem-Solving,” captures some of the applied uses of social media data for awareness and problem solving. Taking a page from the hyper-social online environment, Drs. E Pinar Uca-Günes and Gülsün Eby, both of Anadolu University, explore the potential benefits of tactically created social networks to build distance education programs, in “Social Network Synthesis: A Dynamic Approach for Building Distance Education Programs” (Ch. 12). In the final chapter, an authoring team explores how Australian banks engage the online community through Facebook. Drs. Vindaya Senadheera, Matthew Warren, Shona Leitch, and Graeme Pye explore themes in Facebook wall posts using NVivo in “Facebook Content Analysis: A Study into Australian Banks’ Online Community Engagement” (Ch. 13). Donna Bridgham, in “Code Reuse,” proposes a solidly conceptualized and developed repository for the sharing of code to benefit the work of developers; here is an idea for work-purposive social sharing (Ch. 14).

How a book ultimately shapes out is serendipitous in one sense and a result of a lot of hard and purposeful work on the other. The only appeal of a print (and electronic) book—which is somewhat anachronistic—is that it will be packaged and indexed in a way that may be referenced in the near-present and the far future. Sometimes, it may seem that a more strategic way to achieve a large audience is to create a video for a social media site, but chapters capture irreducibly complex information that would be difficult to present in other ways. I hope that this text may be a building block for others’ insights.
and professional endeavors and achievements. Writing, classically, enables shared understandings with others. It is hard to bridge different understandings among people about a particular topic. There are discordant mental models between people about particular topics. Even an author will find past writings somewhat unrecognizable and maybe even jarring; one way to understand why this may be is because the person who wrote the earlier work was in a different place in life than the more recent individual reading that work. In shared synchronous time, differing individuals may have different cultural, historical, educational, linguistic, and geographical backgrounds, and these may influence how they approach a particular topic.

By itself, a book will not draw future human attention per se; rather, the quality of the work will determine whether any chapter has any value beyond that of a few readers in the near-present. What future readers may find valuable is not predictable given so many factors. What may be highly popular at a point in time may easily become part of the so-called forgotten literature. The foremost work of editors and peer reviewers then is to ensure quality, so authors and authoring teams achieve their highest and best possible at the time of the work’s creation.

Steve Simon, the photographer, talks about how single images placed in a set creates a kind of interplay and a momentum, and that analogy applies here to this collection as well. The respective works are powerful on their own, but their interplay in this set of writing really brings potency to the conceptualization of social media platforms as sources of usable data for exploration and study.