

THE AGENCY GUIDE TO BATTLING MISINFORMATION WITH CONSUMER & MARKET INTELLIGENCE



In
Partnership
With



Table of Contents

Introduction: Misinformation is Everywhere.....	2
Step 1: Preliminary Understanding of Brand Positioning.....	3
Step 2: Reading Around a Topic—Informed Understanding	5
Step 3: Refining the Issue: Sentiment Tells the Story.....	7
Step 4: Segmenting Conversation by Consumer & Media Sites.....	11
<i>Comparing Social Channels</i>	11
<i>Tiered Media Sources</i>	12
<i>Identifying Reporters</i>	13
<i>Social Traction</i>	14
Step 5: Defining Short & Long-term Goals to Shift the Narrative	15
<i>Emerging Trends Tie-in</i>	16
ADDITIONAL CONTEXT:	
Market Insight Offers Important Assist to Consumer Voice.....	17
Driving Conversations: News Media vs Consumer Channels	19
CONCLUSION: Data Analytics Proof Points Drive Outcomes	20

Introduction: Misinformation is Everywhere

With the speed of online, information is abundant. Unfortunately, **so is misinformation**. Whether that comes in the form of sharing wrong information, dissemination of propaganda or data sets cluttered by spam, misinformation in any form is a threat.

Brands need actionable intelligence, and they need it fast. And it must be clean data that cuts across data silos. Doing so requires casting a large net, capturing relevant insight and filtering down to answer the most pertinent questions. And this must include actionable intel that will stop misinformation dead in its tracks, or at least slow it down a good bit. And in this report, **NetBase Quid** and **113 Industries** partnered to cover some of the best practices agencies should employ to do just that.

Specifically, we'll cover how to:

- **Get a firm grip on brand positioning**
- **Read the room around your topic**
- **Refine your understanding with sentiment analysis**
- **Understand the differences between the consumer and media narratives**
- **Influence the consumer conversation through short, and long-term goals**
- **Use market insight to supplement consumer voice discoveries**
- **Uncover which medium is driving conversations**
- **Message out and drive outcomes**

ABOUT OUR PARTNER: 113 INDUSTRIES

113 Industries is an AI driven consumer behavior research company. We are a group of data nerds, and proud geeks. We have come together to solve the product innovation and product commercialization challenges faced by companies. We specialize in developing Consumer Behavior Models using our AI platform. www.113industries.com

Step 1: Preliminary Understanding of Brand Positioning

Your data must be clean and to the point to form a strategy based on every bit of data intelligence available. And when capturing data that spans multiple sources, it's important to remove the noise. Irrelevant data distorts your results and skews your findings.

For example, if you needed to understand misinformation in the 5G conversation, you'd need to filter out mountains of promotional phone giveaways and reposts, announcements, affiliate links, and potentially irrelevant K-pop hashtags, just to name a few.

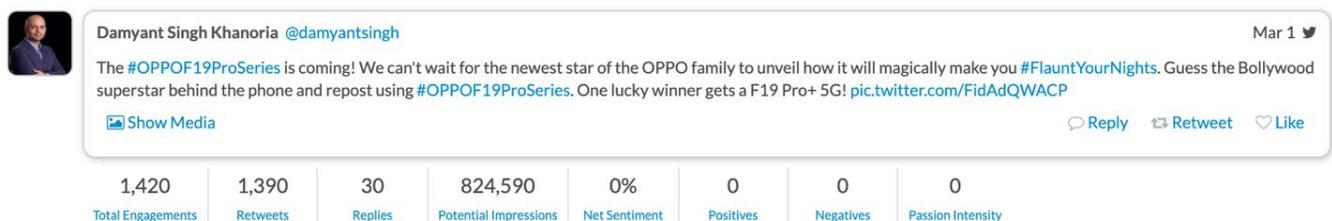


Fig 1: Tweet littered with promotional content and clouding our results.

We'd also explore terms, hashtags, domains and authors that are still potentially clouding our results. And we'd eliminate mentions of sponsored posts, offers, win, buy, instant rebates or other promotional keywords. There are often spammy domains and "bot" authors generating noise as well. And then eliminating reposts further streamlines your data set.

We can cull further within the analysis if we needed to, but taking the steps above (which take mere minutes in an analytics tool) we've already cut away 38% of our broad analysis.



Fig 2: Percentage of irrelevant posts filtered out with a few minutes of work in a data analytics tool.

It is now free of the bulk of the noise and we can see what the main conversational clusters are about the topic, creating a visualization of the top themes. Later, we can apply a “personal narrative” theme, which captures “I” and “my” statements from consumers. This will form a tighter consumer voice circle around the topic.

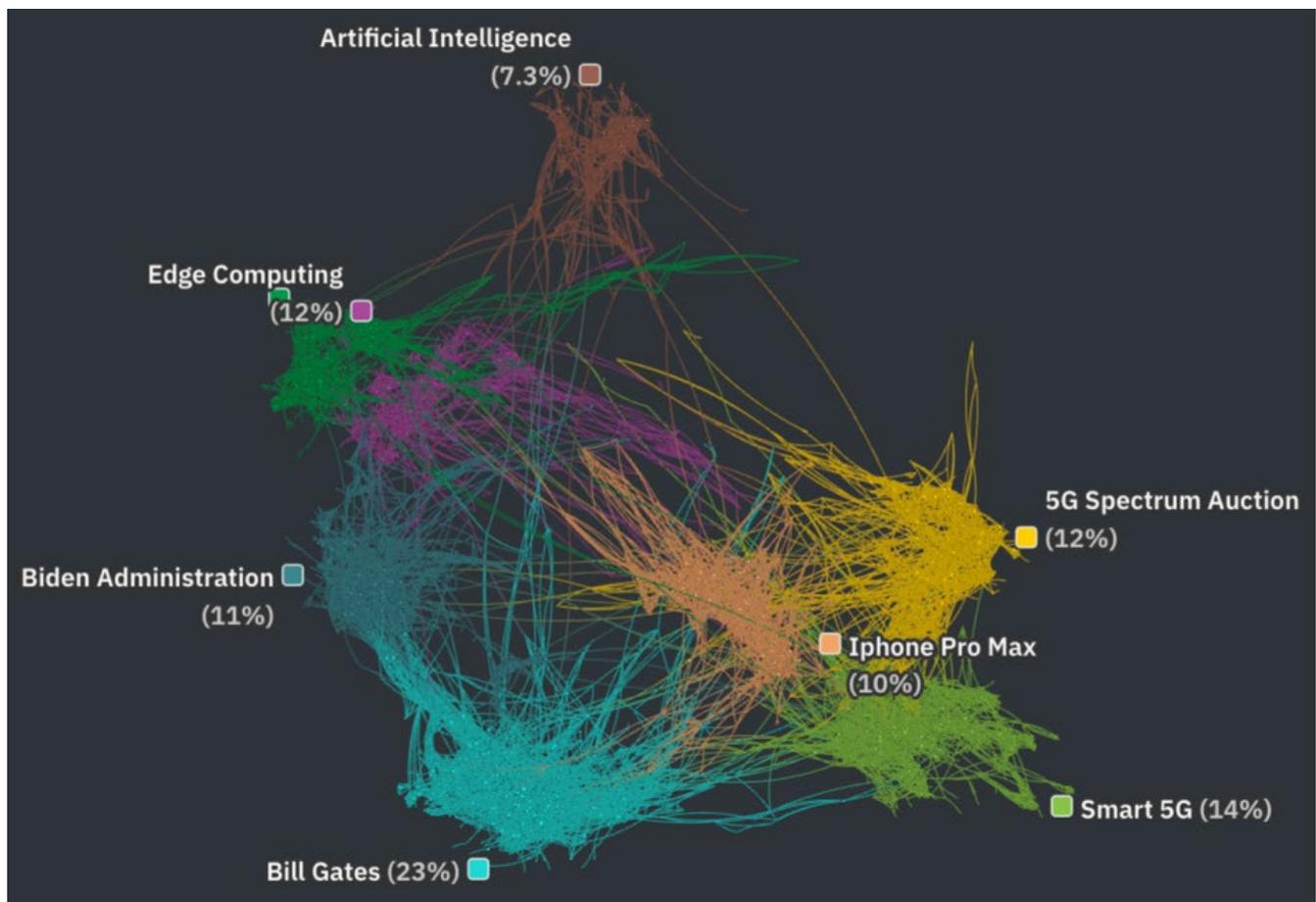


Fig 3: Main conversational clusters surrounding the topic of 5G.

Step 2: Reading Around a Topic— Informed Understanding

When pinpointing misinformation, understanding who the leading voices are, the key opinion leaders (KOLs), and what different publications are writing about the topic is helpful as well. The more data types you analyze, the sharper that picture becomes. Whether you are establishing baseline metrics or managing a full-blown crisis, more intel equals more opportunities to creatively approach the dilemma.

Without even filtering for “top people” mentions, we see above that Bill Gates tops the conversation list. Given the nature of mentions swirling around him in the context of 5G technology, there is a high probability that this cluster contains misinformation to some degree. This can happen in any market, so having the ability to dive in and explore curious results resonating in a conversation is crucial.

As we can see below, our largest 5G cluster, which is about Bill Gates, is riddled with conspiracy theories.

5G Search Focused on Bill Gates

Keywords most mentioned in context revolve around conspiracy theories.

February 20, 2021 - March 20, 2021

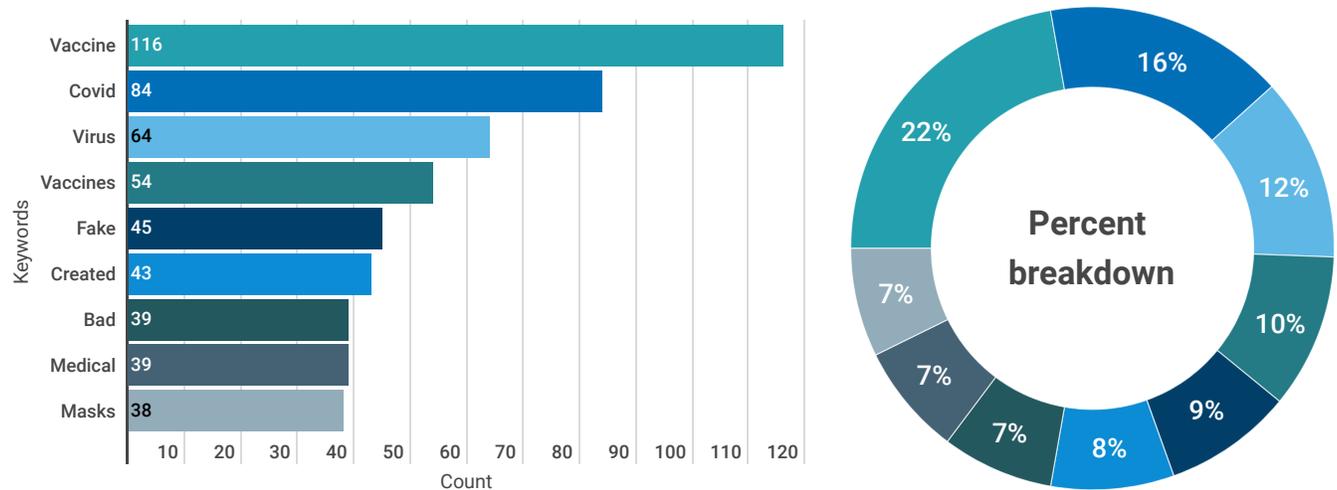


Fig 4: 5G search focused on misinformation surrounding Bill Gates.



Step 3: Refining the Issue: **Sentiment Tells the Story**

Research methods traditionally rely on surveys—bits of somewhat biased feedback from respondents motivated in some way to respond, with answers framed to meet constraints implied in how someone worded the questions. Online data parsed using artificial intelligence does not have this same limitation. It captures intelligence “in the wild” as it naturally occurs and reports back findings with no preconceived opinions around how that data should look.

The strength of sentiment analysis lies in identifying uncharted territory—and quickly offering context supporting its origin. There are typically multiple paths misinformation travels on, and they’re powered by an emotional response. AI dissects massive amounts of data to find those paths and offer them up in powerful visualizations.

News article network with 3311 stories. Colored by sentiment summary. Sized by degree.

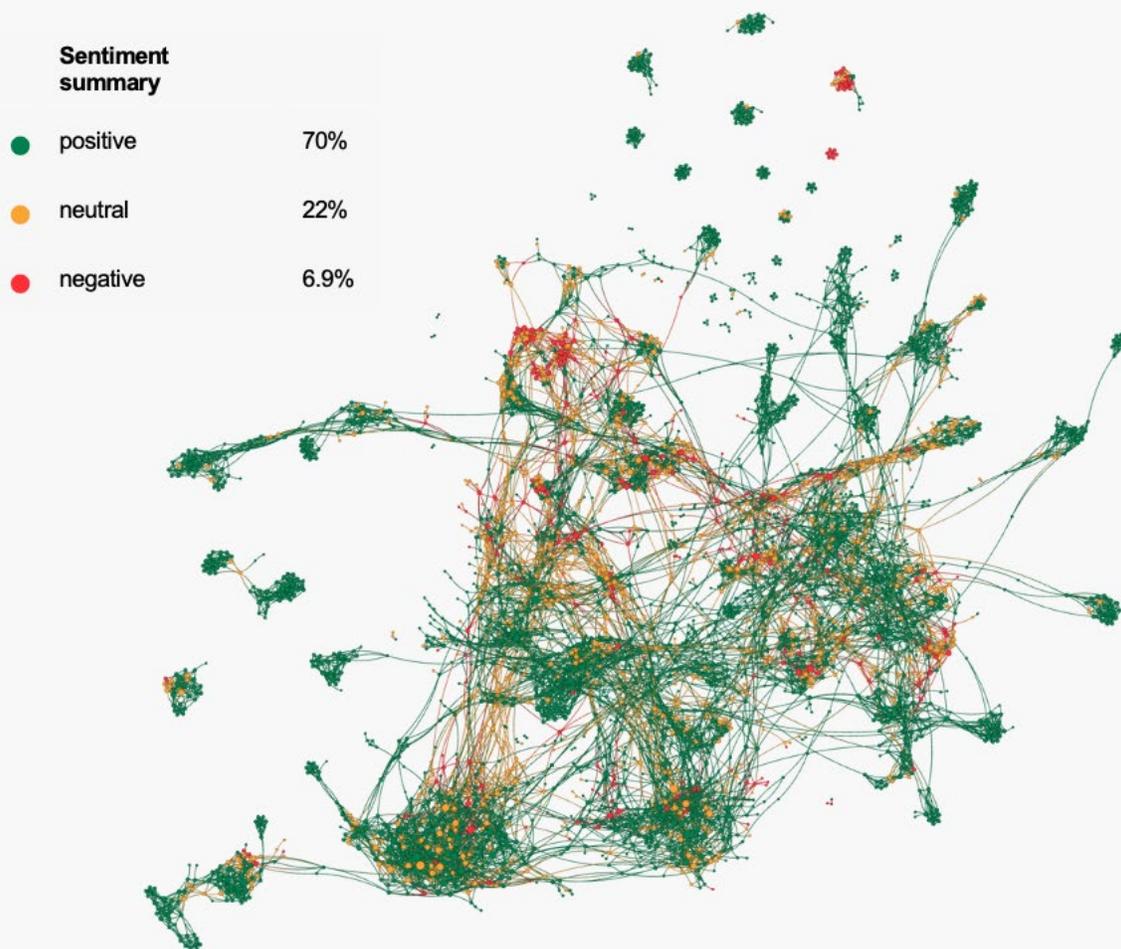


Fig 8: Sentiment around grocery delivery, visualized in cluster format.

And the sentiment drivers, specifically, help us understand what is happening and how people are feeling about it. What are the attributed (key terms), emotions, behaviors and things they're sharing in context of a given topic—and which matter most?



Fig 9: Screenshot of sentiment driver categories used to parse insight.

From a PR standpoint, we'd likely want to look at negative insight first—to better understand what is driving complaints and identify the root of misinformation. But we also want to know what people love, as amplifying those conversations will form part of our plan. In general though, parsing through all of the conversations is key. So, getting that done quickly is essential.

We all recognize that people go online and @mention a brand when they're really upset about something. Or when they're trying to have a set outcome occur, like rectifying an issue, winning a contest or just to get a response. But when consumers are having everyday conversations online, there's typically a more even distribution of positive and negative sentiment. And hidden in these often unseen, unremarkable posts is where the super valuable intel resides.

Next Generation artificial intelligence (AI) captures and categorizes it all with incredible speed and accuracy. And beyond the obvious here, AI also identifies slang, misspellings, emojis and brand imagery (even if it's cut-off, blurred or modified in some way):

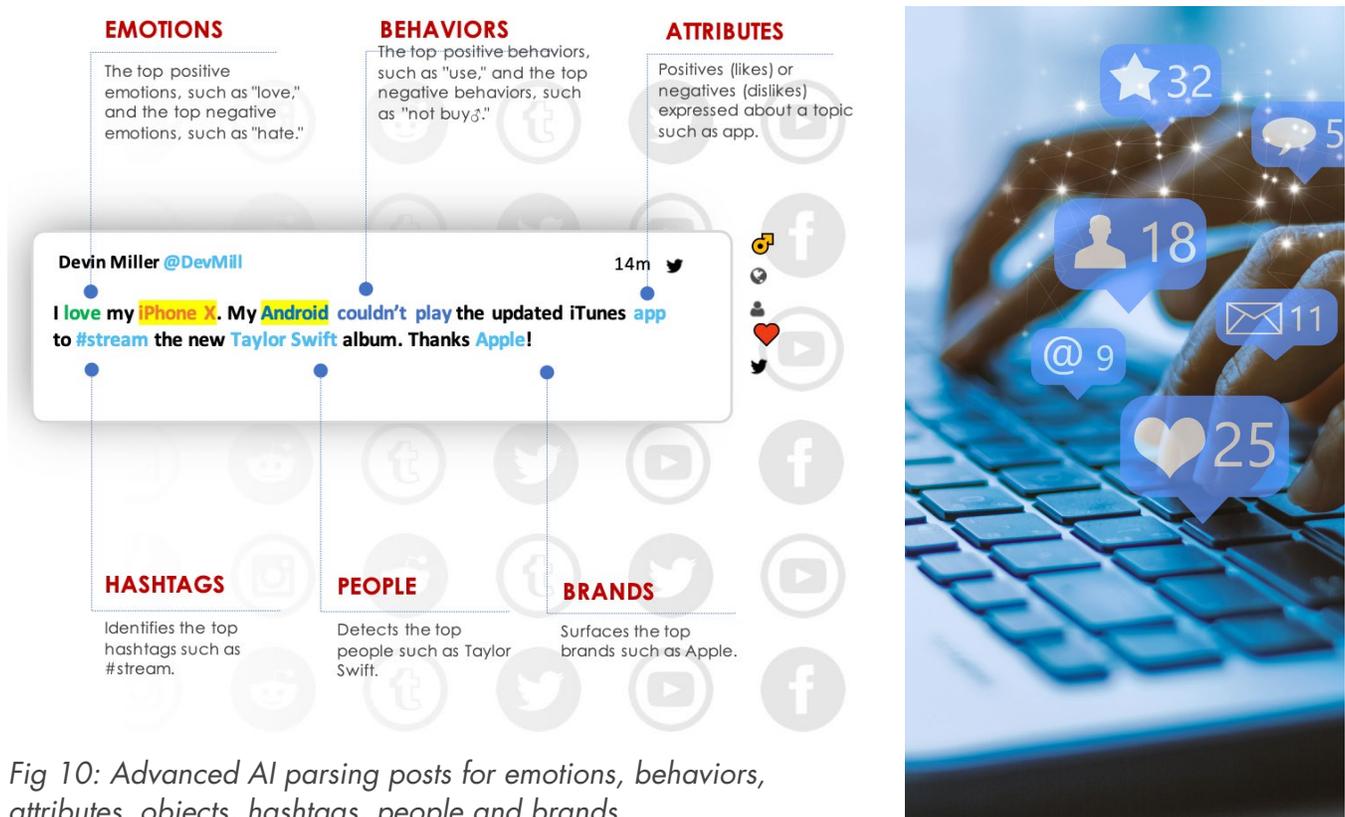


Fig 10: Advanced AI parsing posts for emotions, behaviors, attributes, objects, hashtags, people and brands.

And having our queries mined for sentiment enables us to overlay that insight and tell a better story.

For example, from our 5G analysis, we can pull the Bill Gates cluster into the timeline to see how conversational volume and sentiment have fluctuated over time. This is helpful to track so we can see if misinformation is subsiding or growing. And we could dig in at any points on the timeline to identify what exactly is driving the conversations—and who (beyond the man himself, that is).

Bill Gates' 5G Cluster Timeline View

Over the past month, posts referencing him in the 5G conversation are growing, with 39% negative, 31% neutral and only 28% positive.

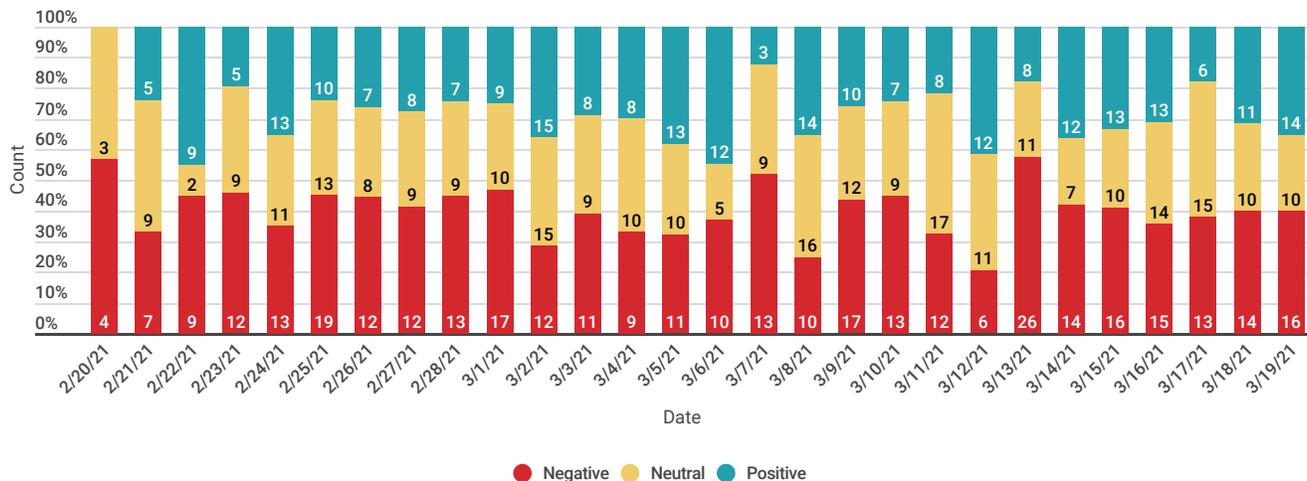


Fig 11: Bill Gates 5G timeline conversations, by sentiment.

And we can identify themes from these queries, capturing both sides of the sentiment coin.

Returning to Palm Oil, we saw five general strands of conversation happening across the sentiment spectrum, with distinct pockets of consumers. We saw those . . .

- **Advocating against palm oil**
- **Advocating for sustainable palm oil**
- **Venting about products that contain palm oil**
- **Asking questions about products that do/do not contain palm oil**
- **Asking general questions about palm oil**

And they fell into the following segments:

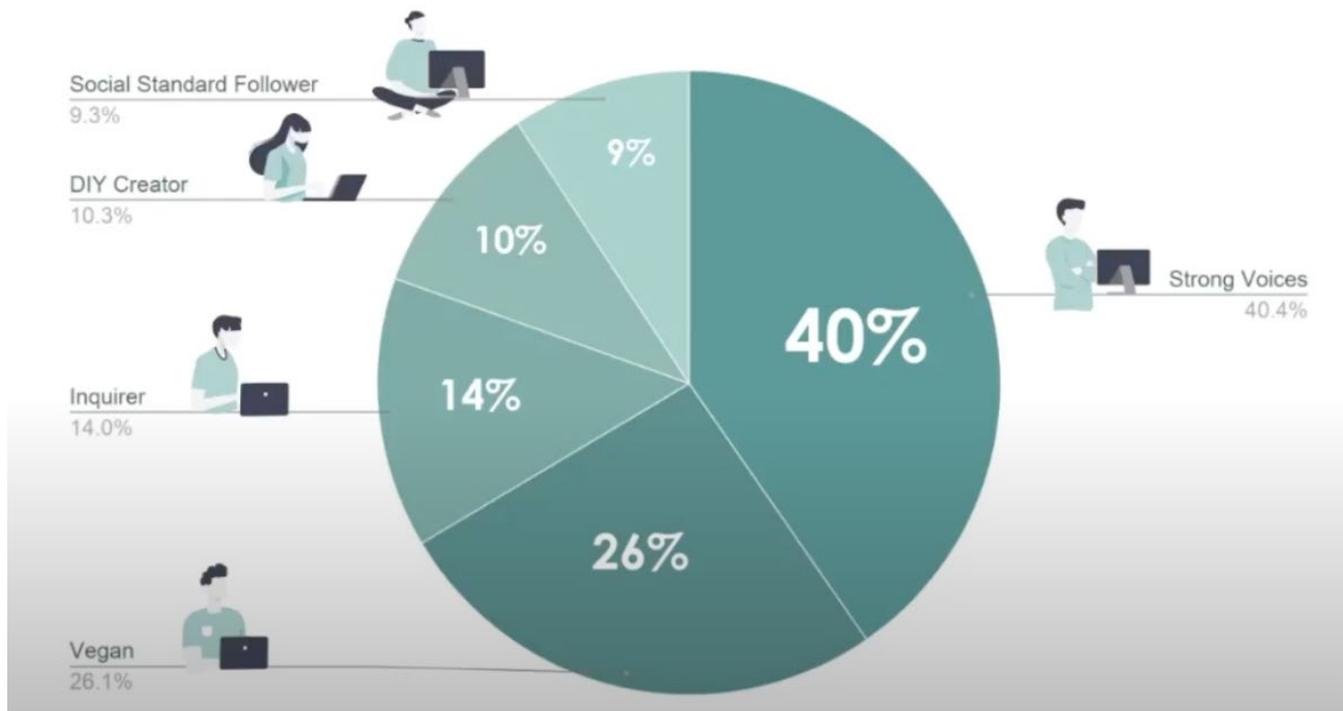


Fig 12: Palm Oil consumer segments found online.

Though we're not yet ready to formulate a response, as we begin to think about doing so, it's good to remember that people who are highly vocal about this or any topic are not necessarily highly informed—but they do have the ear of other consumers. In this instance, the strong voices are the largest segment, so they must be incorporated into your messaging strategy.

Also, we can see the bulk of the people engaging here are value-driven, which provides a great opportunity to both meaningfully connect with and educate these consumers. And we must stress that it is important to educate them or redirect their focus, as consumers 'on the fence' will be easily swayed by reasonably presented information—or that which they see shared online—and uncontested—over and over again. Misinformation cannot be allowed to live online alone.

But how do you do this—and where? We need to segment the conversation by consumer and media sites to see what is being said where, specifically.

Step 4: Segmenting Conversation by Consumer and Media Sites

As we've seen, different facets of the conversation capture the attention of different users—and this is also true when we explore what is “essential” to the media vs what every day consumers tend toward. What's valuable to one isn't always picked up by the other. Sometimes these differences are obvious—and at other times, it's subtle.

Social conversations can also carry different hues across various social media platforms. And finally—differences can also be found between the top and mid-tier news sources too. So many different areas to explore! How far you need to read into these contrasts depends on many factors we've already touched on—like the volume, sentiment and who is talking. And now—where.

COMPARING SOCIAL CHANNELS

To demonstrate how the social narrative differs across two social channels, we've filtered our 5G analysis to show Twitter and Reddit:

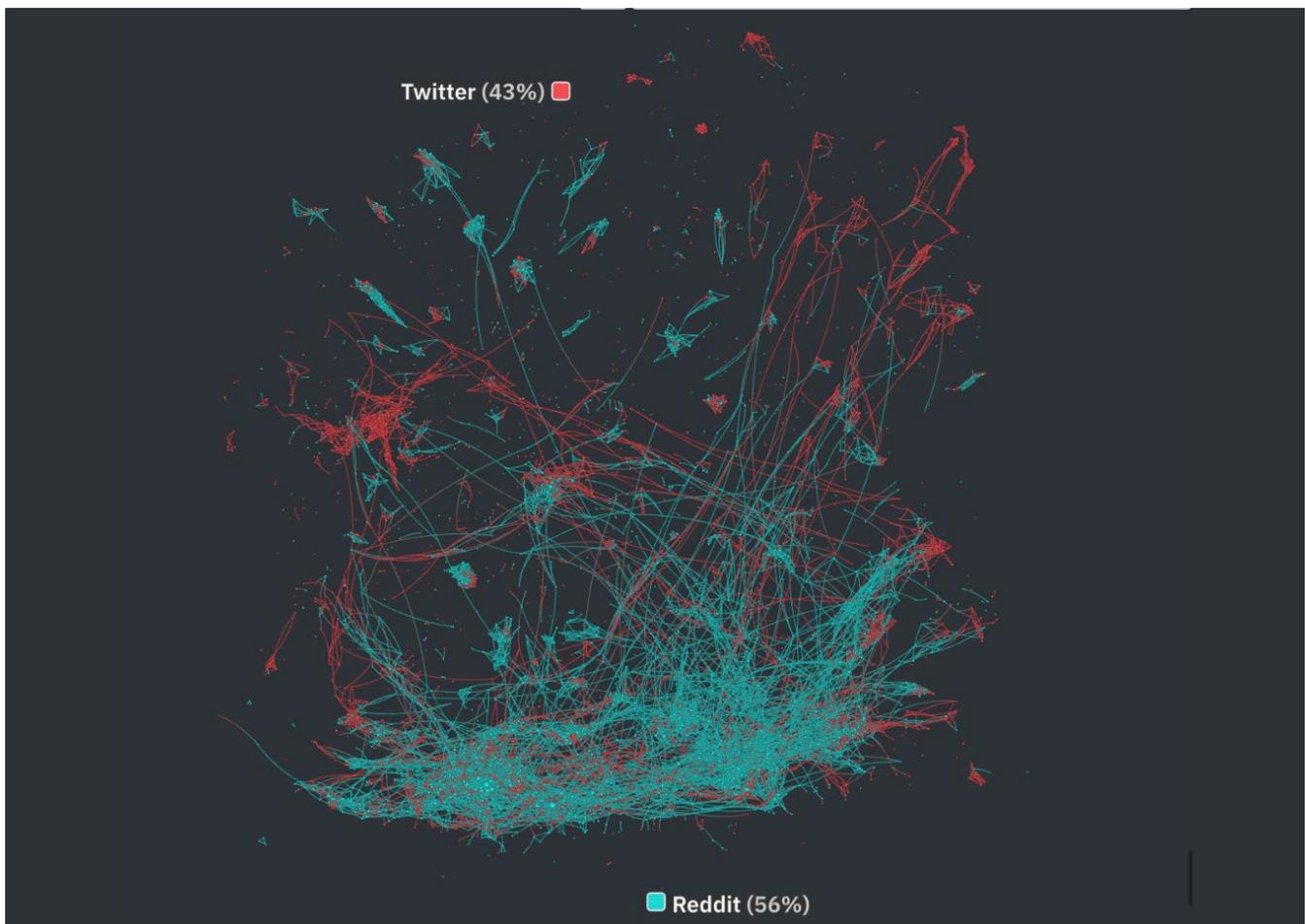


Fig 13: Twitter and Reddit conversation clusters on the topic of 5G.

We can see that the Reddit conversations appear more cohesive and centralized, while Twitter conversations are decentralized. Reddit also carries more volume on the topic at 56% compared to Twitter at 43%.

Earlier, we showed the top ten clusters in our 5G network. Here it is calibrated for our two social sites, which shows their respective volume across each cluster.

5G Conversation Clusters in Twitter & Reddit

Showing 'eccentric conspiracy theories' and Bill Gates posts found mostly on Reddit.

February 20, 2021 - March 20, 2021

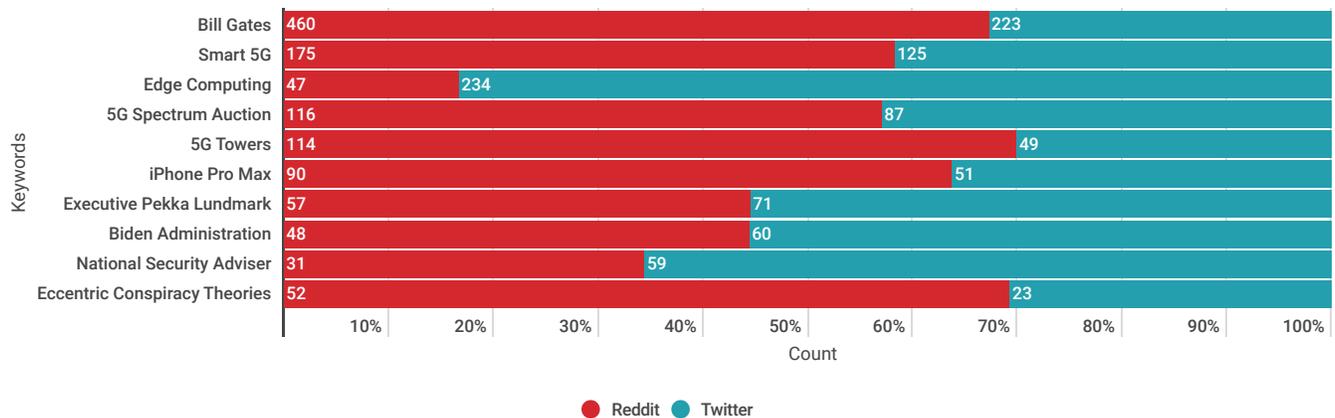


Fig 14: 5G conversation clusters on Twitter and Reddit.

Right away, we can see that Reddit is hosting more of the conversations surrounding Bill Gates and eccentric conspiracy theories. As an agency seeking to safeguard our client from misinformation, this is a trial to get familiar with. And we can segment this further by extracting Reddit data, sorting it by subreddits and reuploading for a deeper analysis. This would allow the client to deploy some targeted messaging that addresses very specific concerns.

On the flip side, Twitter seems to be much more concerned with edge computing, national security and the Biden administration.

TIERED MEDIA SOURCES

And then, coloring our 5G media network by top-tier and mid-tier articles, we can see a significant contrast in volume but general interconnectedness across the network. Top-tier publications account for 14% of the volume, while mid-tier sources comprise 85%.

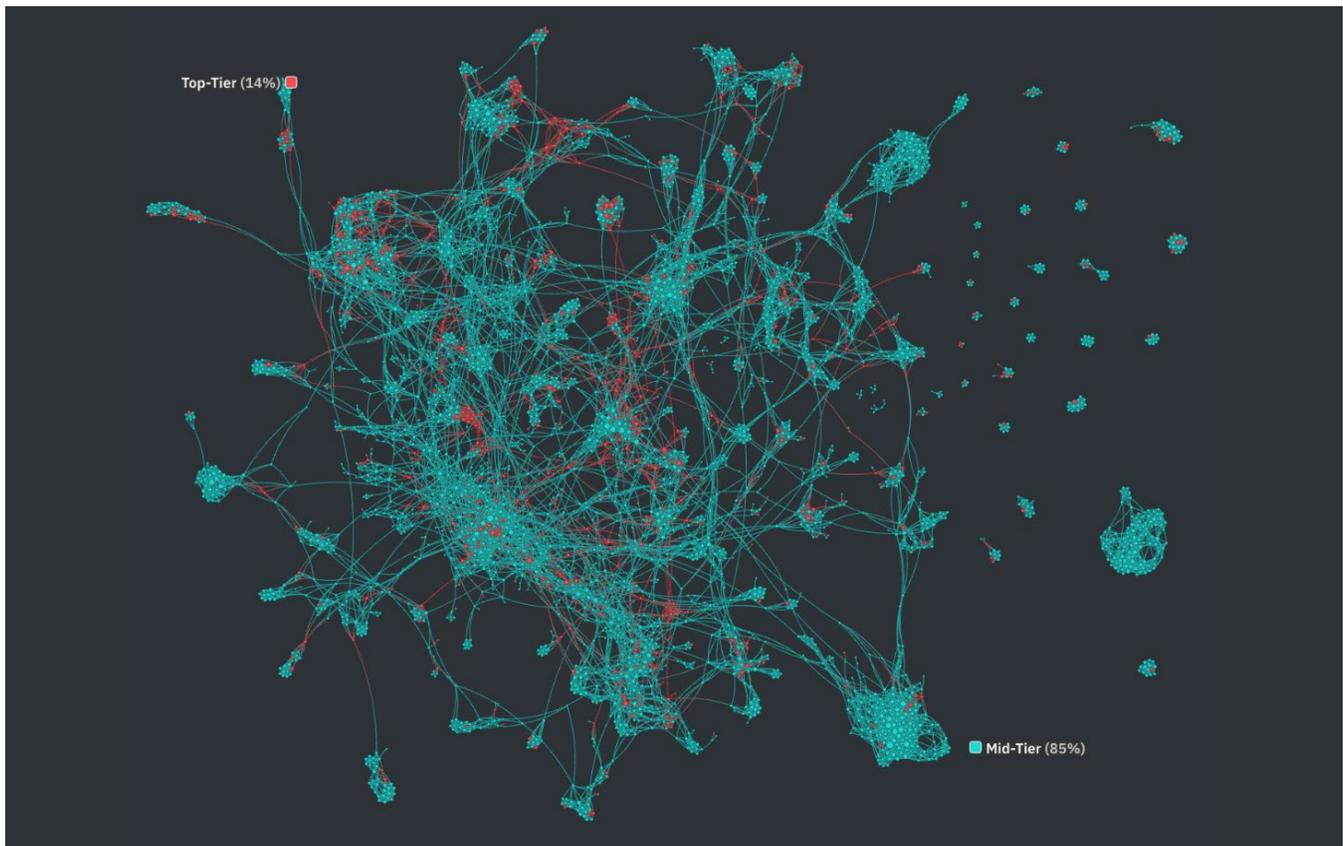


Fig 15: Top-Tier vs Mid-Tier media sources.

That disparity in volume isn't unusual but requires a slightly different approach to understand the focus between the two, as we'd want to compare which sources favor what subject matter. Further, we can segment to reveal the specific publications, and journalists, who are influential in the market—and with consumers.

This is important, as no matter where the misinformation journey takes you, you can likely identify key influencers on the social side or, as we see here, journalists that your client can potentially partner with to help drive awareness.

IDENTIFYING REPORTERS

For example, sorting our results by journalists generating the most social engagement when writing about 5G, we uncover the top ones in the space.

Top Reporters by Social Engagement

Showing reporters with high social engagement scores when reporting on 5G topics.

April 2020 - March 2021

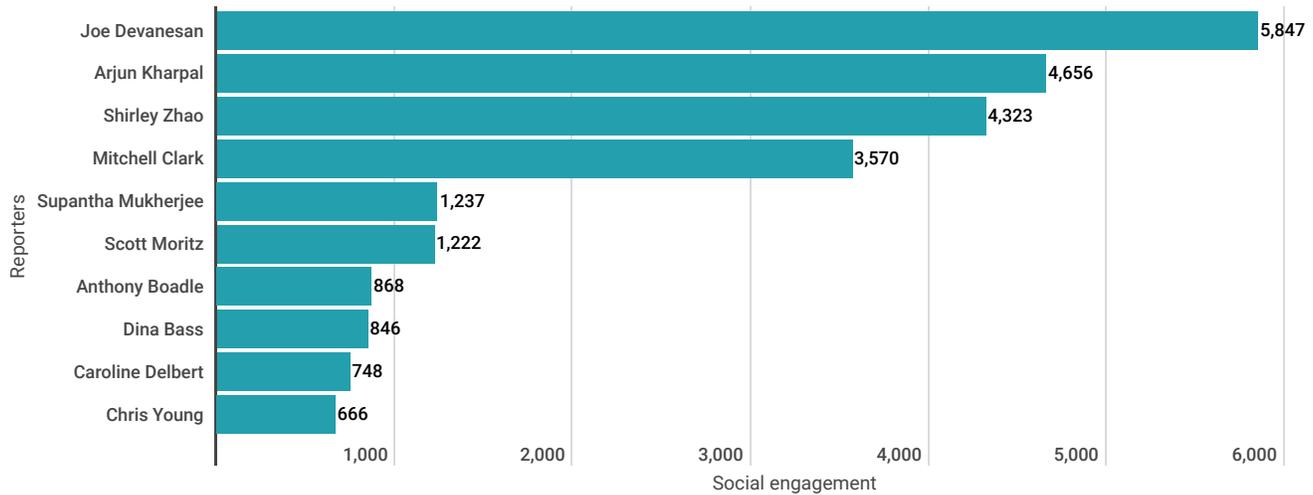


Fig 16: Top reporters by social engagement.

And then there's social traction to consider as well.

SOCIAL TRACTION

In our Palm Oil example, when reviewing stories published by media through the lens of social engagement, we see topics with:

- **High consumer engagement and high post volume—deforestation's impact on animals**
- **Low consumer engagement and high post volume—certification by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)**
- **Low consumer engagement and low post volume—recipes that call for Palm Oil**



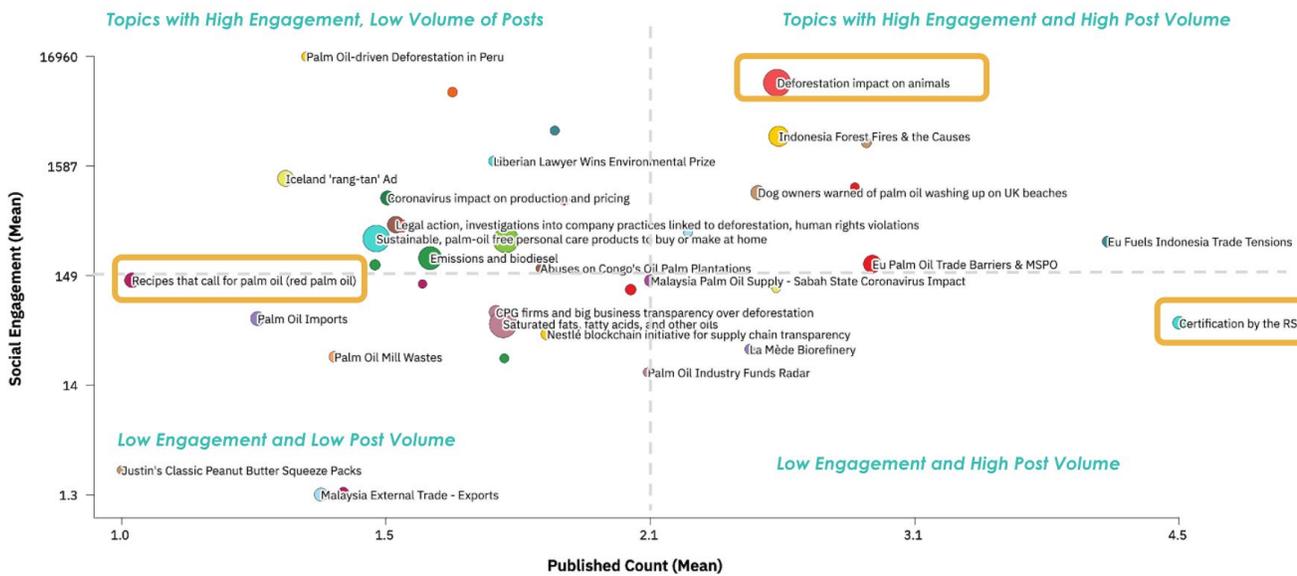


Fig 17: Social traction of various segments in the Palm Oil conversation.

It would seem a focus on “deforestation’s impact on animals” would be in order here. And “how” we do this is next!

Step 5: Defining Short and Long-Term Goals to Shift the Narrative

Understanding the nuances of these overarching conversations and where they’re happening, the next step is to design messaging that lessens the impact of the misinformation and positions the brand properly.

Oftentimes it will make the most sense to focus on redirecting the conversation to something positive instead of trying to combat against the negatives. Companies could spend millions on educating the consumer and trying to teach them a whole new belief system, but it would take a lot of time and a lot of effort to move the needle a correspondingly small amount. Shifts in attitudes, perceptions and behaviors generally take time to build and bubble to the surface—and they can take an equal amount of time to change. The bigger the shift, the longer it takes. Also, **a recent study showed** consumer “purchase preference was higher under positive framing compared to negative and neutral framing.”

So, when seeking to redirect the conversation to something, we would want to focus on those pockets we know to be positive based on our research. We know:

- **Where the positive sentiment lives**
- **Which conversations are capturing the most positive engagement**

- **Questions customers have where we can provide answers and create positive engagement**
- **The sheer number of conversations happening**
- **Where these conversations are happening**

And in the process, we can add bits of an educational component into the messaging; parts that may challenge their current thinking, but do so in a gentle and nonconfrontational way. This will plant seeds for future watering by the client, or for the consumer to pursue on his/her own.

Returning to our Palm Oil example, the approach on that specific project was to do precisely that—focus on the positive conversation. And that would include messaging around:

- **The wellness and dietary benefits of Palm Oil**
- **The positive impact of *sustainable* palm oil on the environment**
- **Supporting communities in need**

And these messaging points connect with the next tactic—using consumer and market intelligence to sort out emerging trends to tie into.

EMERGING TRENDS TIE-IN

Emerging trends can offer opportunities to line up your long-term goals with where trend lines are already moving to help you make the most headway. They can act as a plumb line to make the task a good bit more manageable.

For example, you've surely noticed that sustainability and climate awareness have continued to trend upwards straight through the pandemic. No matter what industry your client is in, if there is a way to tie their long-term goals into one of those existing narratives, it would be sure to capture attention and generate goodwill.

Even an oil and gas company focused on expanding drilling operations could do this by highlighting the initiatives they have in place to:

- **Protect the environment in which they operate**
- **Reduce energy consumption**
- **Purchase carbon credits**
- **Commit to planting trees**

They could take these long-term goals of growth and connect them to emerging trends to accelerate their efforts to shift perceptions and combat misinformation about the energy sector along the way.

Every bit of this requires active social listening to shift tactics and meet audiences where they are. And as it makes sense to, as the days of queuing up content to post a month, or even a week ahead, are gone.

And although we know the consumer voice shapes the overarching market conversation, we mustn't overlook those broad strokes either.

MARKET INSIGHT OFFERING IMPORTANT ASSIST TO CONSUMER VOICE

When battling misinformation, we're typically focused primarily on the actual consumer voice, but it's always useful to discover things we may not be aware of, so having market insight—that bigger, generalized picture—is valuable; often in unexpected ways.

Subtle changes in the social climate and perceptions can relate back to nuanced market insight and we might miss these subtleties while staring right at them. Clarifying and augmenting what you see at a macro/market level helps provide proof points and context around what's happening to the voice of the customer on a micro level.

For example, if your client was in the grocery industry, understanding the growing trend of food delivery services would be important from a macro level. We could see when the shift took place, understanding that the virus was the catalyst:

Mid-tier news articles on grocery delivery over the past year

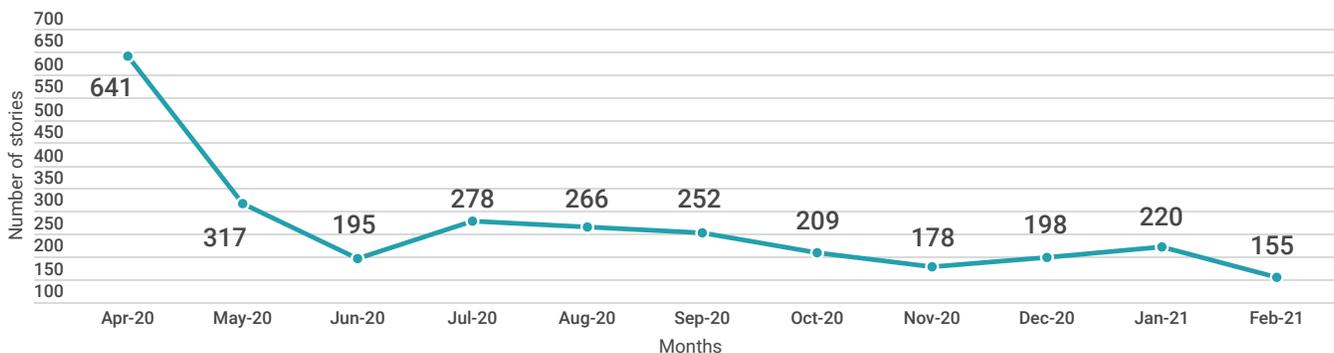


Fig 18: Mid-tier news articles on grocery delivery over the past year.

Grocery delivery existed before the pandemic but wasn't a routine part of most people's lives.

According to McKinsey, with the onset of COVID-19, roughly 15% of U.S. consumers tried it for the first time. And many embraced it afterward to minimize exposure to the virus.

But, we can also note above that the conversation is steadily decreasing. Why?

Understanding how consumers feel about delivery services, on the micro-level offers ongoing value here. Exploring grocery delivery conversations, what if we saw a growing worry about food safety while being transported? As we can see below, "safety" concerns mention grocery deliveries most often, with the idea of autonomous robots and other 'on demand' options resonating positively.

Safety Concerns in Food Delivery

Consumers posting about food safety with grocery deliveries.

April 2020 - March 2021

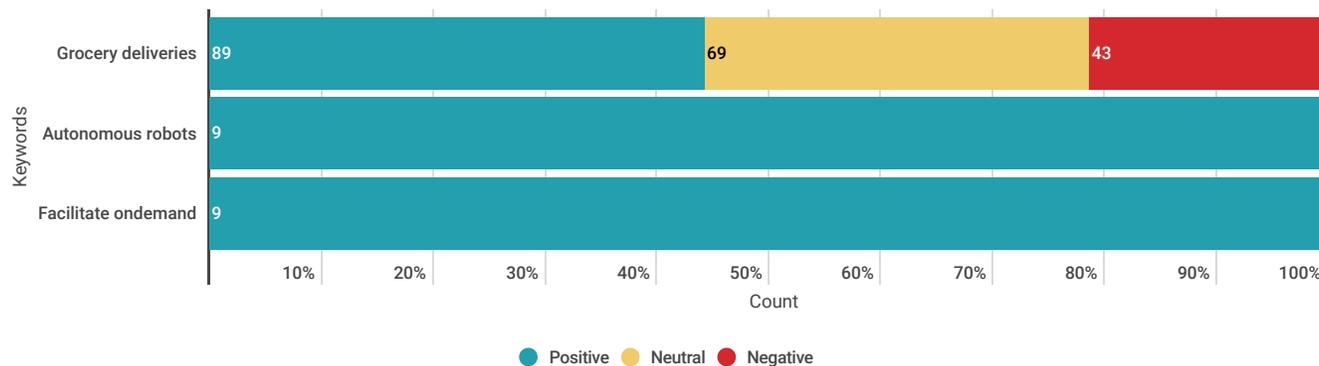


Fig 19: Safety concerns surrounding food delivery.

Or maybe they're talking about a lack of reliable options in a given geographic area?

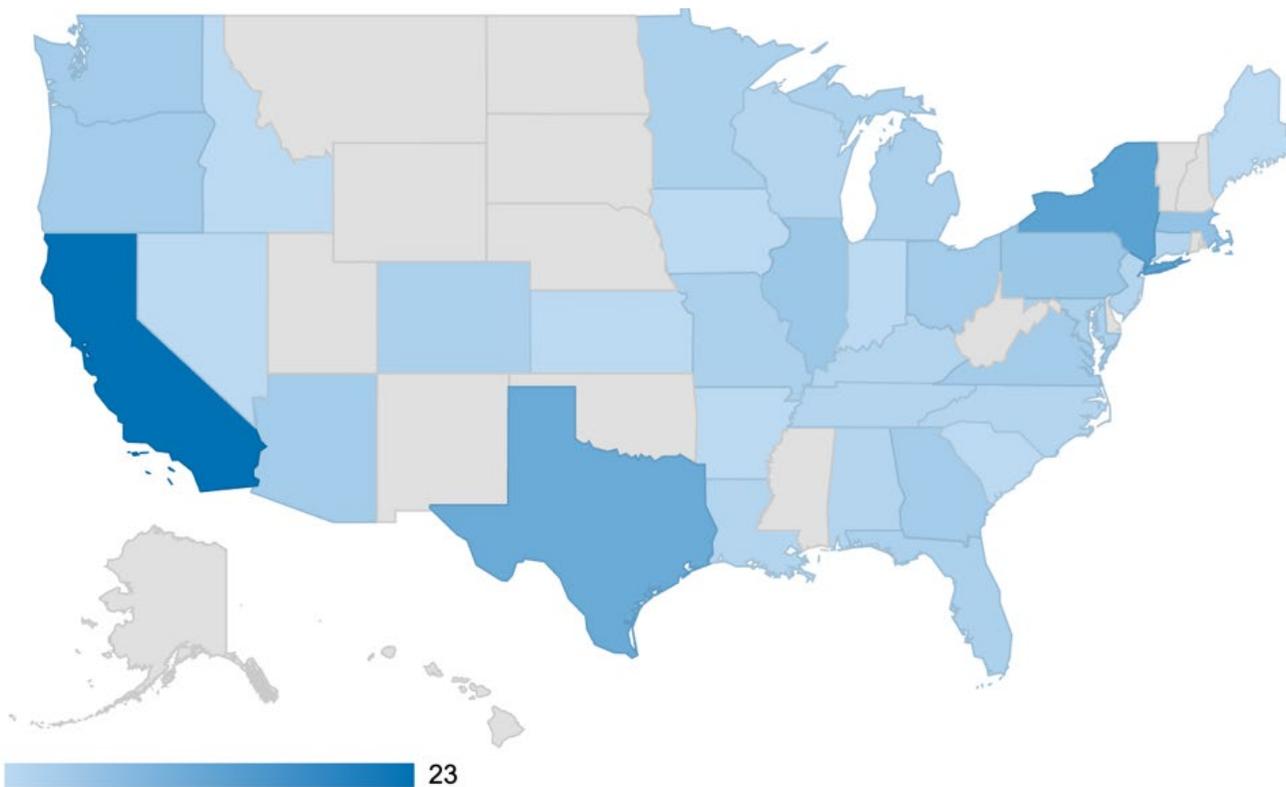


Fig 20: Grocery delivery conversation by state.

This insight could manifest in messaging sharing positive consumer experiences with food delivery services, and the many benefits of it, guiding them toward rethinking grocery delivery as a viable long-term option. Or it could be the opening a quick serve restaurant was waiting for, with intel supporting an expansion in the precise area facing a need.

But, if you aren't monitoring conversation volume around your topic from a macro level, those minor blips on the sentiment screen may appear less important than they actually are. These items may be 'low post volume and low engagement' today but could gain traction quickly tomorrow.

And you never know where it might originate, as both news and social sites are capable of making conversations viral, so having a handle on both is key.

DRIVING CONVERSATIONS: NEWS MEDIA VS CONSUMER CHANNELS

One of the areas where you can clear the air for your clients is not only by highlighting the contrasts in the narrative between traditional media and social media, which we've already spoken to—but also, around which is the driving force and how the two potentially align.

The media perspective is generally louder and more straightforward—and more expected, from a brand standpoint. But often these days, social media becomes the news that traditional outlets are reporting on. And consumers are in the driver's seat. It's common practice for media outlets to comb social media sites such as Reddit and Twitter to source commentary on an existing story. Often, a social media phenomenon *is* the story.

That was the case when Reddit users on the Wall Street Bets subreddit rallied together to buy shares of GameStop. It wasn't a reaction to an ongoing story—it was an organic event that played out on social media. And it eventually got picked up when traditional news outlets got wind of it.

That being the case, days before the event broke mainstream, **social media listening** for anything related to gaming, game retailers or retail investing would have picked up on the buzz going on in the subreddit. Conversely, the media took a while to catch on.

What does it mean for brands? Before misinformation hits the fan, there's often a chance to get ahead of it.

Social media conversations taking off in the Wall Street Bets subreddit over GameStop stock.

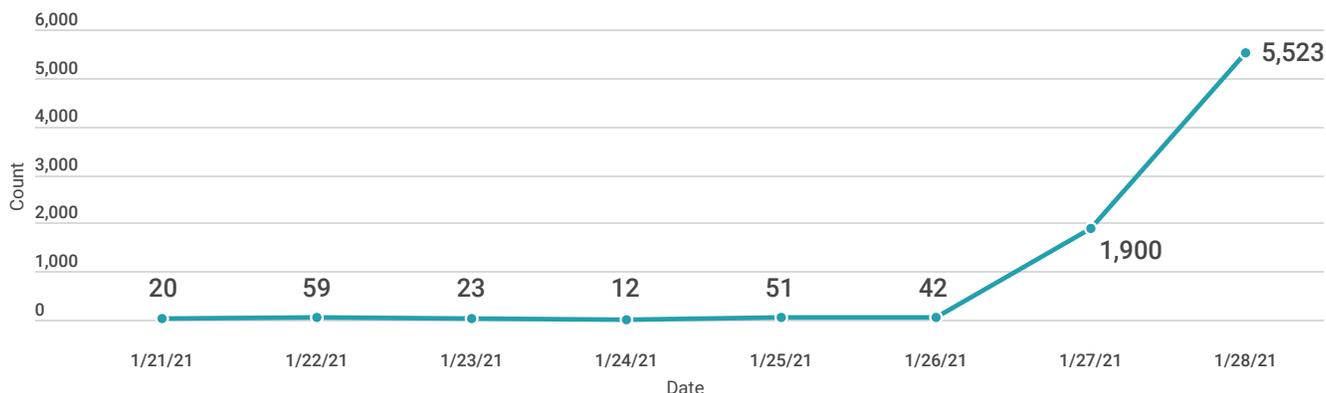


Fig 21: Social media conversations taking off in the Wall Street Bets subreddit over GameStop stock

- **Maybe they don't care about the competition right now and only want to measure against their own, previous efforts?**
- **Or they only want to see what is registering in terms of negative sentiment, mention volume or certain influencers they've partnered with?**
- **Maybe they'd like to see all of it in one dashboard?**

Presenting a variety of options for this data capture helps them crystalize this thinking.

One great way to monitor the effectiveness of our messaging is by mapping out the consumer journey.

For example, if our client was Impossible Foods, ahead of our deploying our messaging, we would use a chart like below, where purchase intent, post-purchase and loyalty phases could use a boost. We would also see that sentiment looks great for purchase intent and loyalty, and that the disconnect seemed to be happening post-purchase.

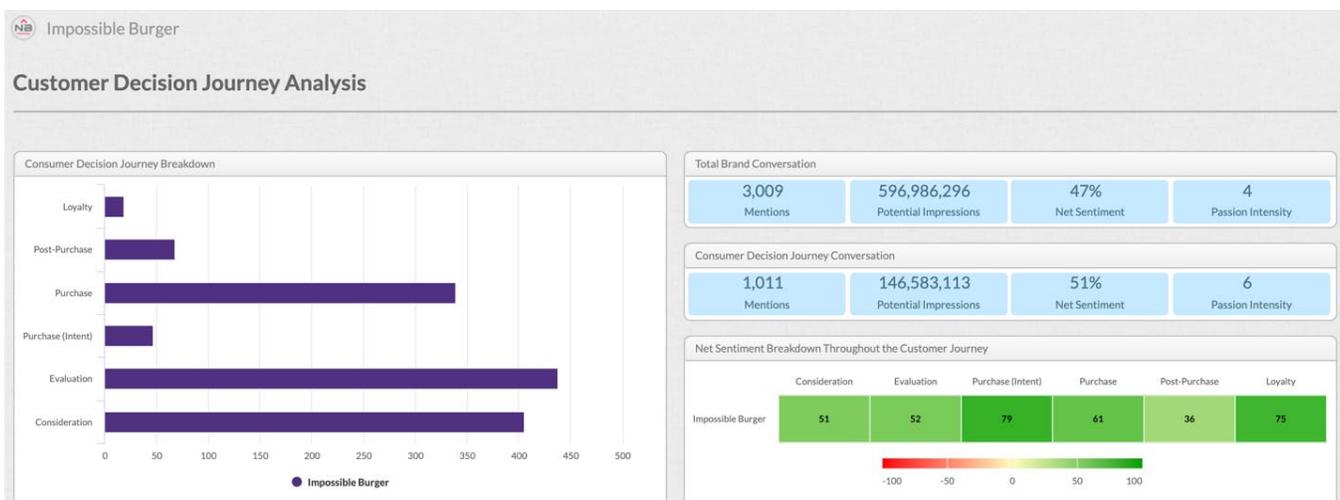


Fig 23: Customer journey purchase path.

Armed with this intel, we would make a point to develop associated messaging that would help us reconnect with consumers post-purchase, and then closely track those engagements to see what worked.

What are the consumer talking points behind the sentiment there? Right now, the post-purchase conversation shows:

- **Some vegans who are torn on texture and appearance, saying it looks too similar to the real thing.**
- **Others arguing over the health aspects of the ingredients in Impossible Burgers vs those of the competition.**

Engaging consumers in conversations about each would not only create touchpoints post-purchase but provide educational offerings for other consumers who were in the consideration phase. So, it's a win-win.

And, as we mentioned the competition, uncovering what people are saying about the competition offers additional data points to bolster your observations and helps you create baseline metrics to measure against. This includes competing brands and products that are capturing market share, as well as overall barriers to purchase. All valuable intel to share with your client and build into your associated messaging:

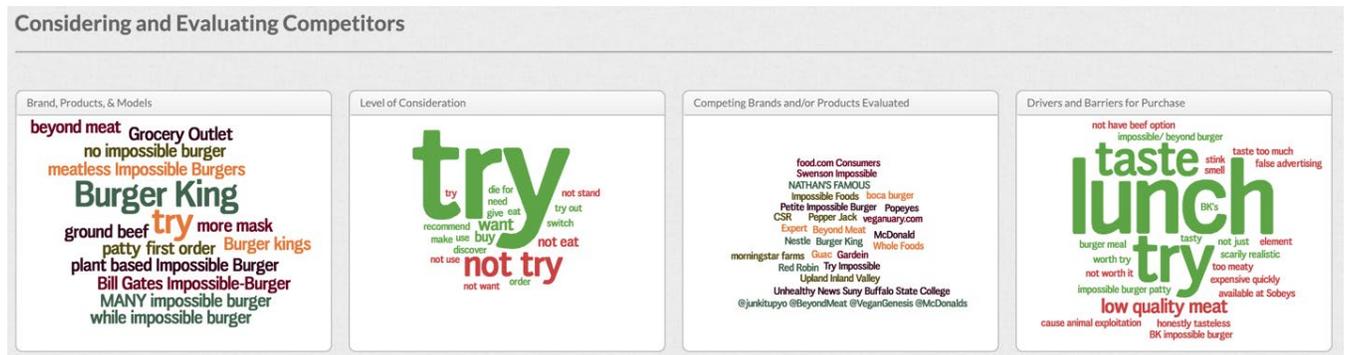


Fig 24: Consideration phase, as it relates to competitors.

Many clients like to see timelines tracked over days, weeks, months or quarters. This offers a quick snapshot of spikes in mentions, posts or impressions, as well as sentiment tracked over time.

Regardless of which elements you incorporate, once a dashboard template is made, the hard part is done. You can regularly refresh it to populate whatever insight makes the most sense. Maybe you'll want to track the sources we mentioned above, or specific domains. Some agencies like capturing popular posts sorted by engagement to offer a real-time capture of where things stand, but ultimately the impact you seek to create must be reflected in the widgets you include. This is sometimes the hardest part. With so much consumer and market intelligence immediately at your fingertips, the real challenge is deciding which parts of it best tell your story and demonstrate impact to your client. It's a good problem to have.

Reach out to explore ways we can help you separate relevant intel from noise online, or if you would like a demonstration of NetBase Quid in action!



NETBASE QUID™

NetBase Quid is the next generation consumer and market intelligence platform, delivering contextual insights to reveal business trends, connect with consumers, and understand the story behind competitors and the market.

The platform uses advanced artificial intelligence to process billions of indexed resources across all forms of structured and unstructured data, empowering our brand, agency and consulting services customers to make smart, data driven decisions accurately, quickly and efficiently.

NetBase Quid is a trusted partner of American Airlines, Coca-Cola, Ogilvy, T-Mobile, United Airlines, YUM! Brands, Walmart, Hyundai, Wunderman Thompson, Microsoft, BCG and The New York Times. Learn more at www.netbasequid.com

NETBASE QUID HEADQUARTERS
3945 Freedom Circle, Suite 730
Santa Clara, CA 95054
P: 855-762-6764
E: info@netbasequid.com
www.netbasequid.com

 NetBase Quid

 @NetBaseQuid

 @NetBaseQuid

 @NetBaseQuid

 NetBase Quid

Trusted by the World's Top Brands

©2021 NetBase Quid

20210512_v2



NETBASE QUID IS THE LEADER IN CONSUMER AND MARKET INTELLIGENCE

