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DEEPLY SUPERFICIAL DIGITAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT? THE CASE OF TWITTER AND MOVEMBER 2013

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Movember is a charity and charity event concerned with men's health. The event takes place during November and predominantly involves male participants (mobros) being sponsored to grow a moustache and document the activity. Movember began in Australia in 2004 with a focus upon raising awareness regarding prostate cancer. The scope of Movember has since expanded globally and also now includes awareness raising activity related to testicular cancer and men's mental health. In 2012 the charity reported raising over 141M AUD. The money raised is used to undertake research into treatments, and support services, for prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and mental health. A key actor with Movember has been social media – Movember has presences on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube and Twitter. One might say that Movember has successfully embraced the potentials for public engagement with health and wellbeing issues via social media. Indeed, Movember even engages a hard to reach group, men, who are well known to rebuff health and wellbeing issues due to the pressures of normative conceptions of masculinity (Vogel et al. 2011).

There has been much discussion since the 1990s regarding the potentials of the Internet, and digital media more generally, for health education. Of particular interest here is that research which suggests that digital media can: exploit the resources of patients themselves (Hejlesen et al. 2001); afford improved accessibility because they are said to be available 24 hours a day access and offer the pacing of treatment to suit individuals' needs and lifestyles (Strecher 2007; Rice et al. 2012); and offer increased levels of interactivity and therefore, much more scope for public engagement than with the mass media (Turner-McGrievy et al. 2009; Ito and Brown 2010). Of course there are also problems associated with such approaches particularly in terms of the perceived credibility of Internet sources (Eysenbach 2008) levels of digital media literacy (Gray and Klein 2006) and of course more general considerations regarding digital inclusion.

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That said, the literature to date, regarding engagement with social media for health and wellbeing is nascent. An emphasis on the power of social media publics, and the participatory turn, runs through much of this work and there are emerging concerns with regard to how such engagements can be evaluated. At present much of the discourse regarding evaluation, in practice particularly, is heavily influenced by more general clinical practice. In enfolded clinical practice expectations, evaluation is configured as seeking to establish irrefutable links between a deep and meaningful intervention (or social media engagement) and a clinical outcome. What seems to be less considered here are the potentials for superficiality of engagement.

Using activity generated with Twitter during Movember 2013, we interrogate the natures of superficiality running through what can be defined as a highly successful public health engagement intervention. Indeed, Movember arguably has not just been successful in one year in terms of raising funds for the causes it is concerned with, it has done this year-on-year since 2004. We tracked the keyword 'movember' (without the hash symbol) using an in-house installation of YourTwrapperkeeper hosted on a NECTAR server. Data collection ran from 01 October - 04 December 2013, covering the ramp-up and wind-down periods of the event. We collected a total of 1,313,426 tweets from 759,345 unique users. In order to understand the natures of superficiality:

- Lists of the *users* who were @replied or retweeted most frequently in association with Movember were extracted. The top 100 users, those receiving the most mentions, were then categorized by their predominant displays of identity. The nature of the dialogue surrounding them was then analysed.
- We extracted all URLs from the entire corpus of tweets and generated a list of the most-shared URLs. We assume here that URLs work well as a proxy for the external web or mainstream media content and resources that are most active in the public engagement around an event or issue. The top 100 URLs were then coded based on a combination of genre and function, giving us an additional perspective on which cultural artifacts are most 'resonant' (because they were most frequently passed on by other users) in the social media activity around any given topic or event (as argued by (Hjorth and Burgess 2014)).

From this analysis we are able to demonstrate roles of superficiality of activity and connectivity in relation to Movember as related to the content and users associated with the higher levels of activity. This is evident in the lack of involvement with the underlying health matters of concern to Movember. Instead we see, mostly, minor forays into the event by celebrities, sports personalities and their fans. There is also opportunistic tagging by commercial entities. Participation in moustache growing is very low and even these people do little to engage directly with issues associated with prostate cancer, testicular cancer and men's mental health. Superficiality is strong within the event where higher levels of activity are concerned. The extent and nature of superficiality throughout the middle and lower levels of activity associated with Movember 2013 are currently being interrogated in order to consider the relationships, if any, between superficiality and popularity. Further work, we argue, is necessary to understand the comparative roles of superficiality not only as related to different levels of activity and popularity within a given social media site, but also across sites being engaged with for any given event. Although Twitter is a major platform for Movember, further work is

required to understand the influence of other platforms where activity may be lower, but 'deeper' engagement may be higher.

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