
Accessing the Twitter API V2 academic access

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Abstract

Anyone who studies Twitter private-public sphere (Papacharissi, 2010) knows that the API can only collect tweets that are less than a week old if you do not have a researcher access since 2021. It is therefore difficult to do historical work on twitter unless you anticipate history or if you are a senior researcher and you are granted access to Twitter developer portal for researchers. For my thesis, I would like to study the circulation of feminist ideas on Twitter at the time of the adoption of the Schiappa law in 2018. I therefore need to work on tweets that are more than four years old. However, I am unable to do so right now for technical reasons. In my presentation, I propose, for methodological purposes, to tell the story of my request for researcher access to the API. Indeed, it will become regular to do research on social media and internet archives, given that it is a public sphere where things happen that influence the political and social life of our countries (Bruns, 2016). With this intervention, I am in line with the researchers who wish to make the techniques and tools of digital humanities more transparent (transparency is part of two of the objectives of the Journal of Digital History, <https://journalofdigitalhistory.org/en/>). I would also try to raise the ins and outs of relying on a private company to access its archives. Indeed, in this process I will have to agree to legal terms regarding the use of the tweets I would collect. Similarly, I could very well put a lot of effort into this application only to be denied access at the company's discretion. I will therefore have to find other ways to have access to Twitter Archives (GetOldTweets, scrawling, etc.). I will examine further the implications of Digital Service Act adopted by the European Union on 5 July 2022 for researchers' access to Twitter data below. It is a staging of my research work in order to expose the entrails of the digital researcher's work. I wish to show, beyond the results, the difficulties to set up such research without real training nor scientific team behind to help (as in most of the research laboratories not specialised in Digital Humanities) on techniques and methods which prove to be nevertheless compulsory to understand our digital societies nowadays. Of course, other researchers have paved the way (Schafer, Musiani, Borelli, 2016; Clavert, 2016, 2018; Gebeil, 2021; Legrain, 2019; Brügger, Schroeder, 2017; etc). Yet, as far as the digital humanities are concerned, it feels like an eternal restart for every researcher who wants to confront the question (see the instability of the methods outlined by Clavert, 2022), starting from the beginning: how to get access to my primary sources?

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