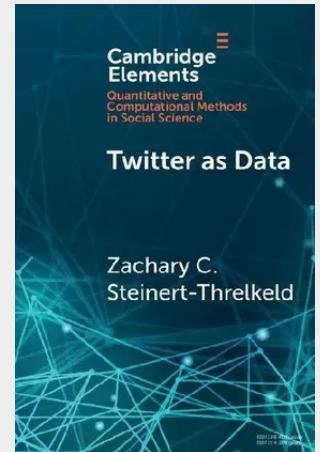


Twitter as Data

The rise of the internet and mobile telecommunications has created the possibility of using large datasets to understand behavior at unprecedented levels of temporal and geographic resolution. Online social networks attract the most users, though users of these new technologies provide their data through multiple sources, e.g. call detail records, blog posts, web forums, and content aggregation sites. These data allow scholars to adjudicate between competing theories as well as develop new ones, much as the microscope facilitated the development of the germ theory of disease. Of those networks, Twitter presents an ideal combination of size, international reach, and data accessibility that make it the preferred platform in academic studies. Acquiring, cleaning, and analyzing these data, however, require new tools and processes. This Element introduces these methods to social scientists and provides scripts and examples for downloading, processing, and analyzing Twitter data.



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