

Case study

UK Metropolitan Police use social media to engage citizens



HP Marketing Optimization enables UK's leading police force to better engage with the community and respond to local events

Industry

Government

Objective

Create a platform to better utilize social media channels to achieve enhanced business and operational outcomes

Approach

Engaged with a long-term infrastructure supplier for the UK Police to create a three-month trial in two London boroughs

IT matters

- Identifies related concepts and topics before they become noticeable trends
- Proves functionality of social media analysis tools in a real-time, high-pressure live environment

Business matters

- Automatically analyzes large volumes of data, highlights 'known unknowns,' and helps resolve and address the 'needle in a haystack' problems
- Demonstrates usefulness to live operations, identifying witnesses and quickly spreading news updates on incidents
- Speeds the analysis of social media trends, improving allocation of appropriate resources, saving time and money



“To be able to now monitor sentiment, respond to messages, and reply on a London-wide or national scale is of tremendous benefit. Just in terms of resources saved scanning papers, internet, and other social media feeds, the HP solution will assist greatly in campaign planning.”

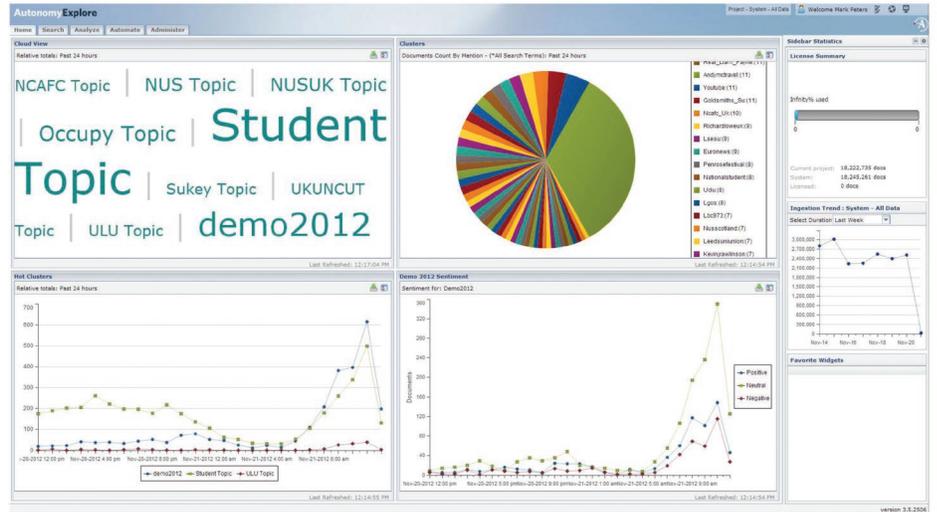
– Andrew Watson, deputy CIO for Metropolitan Police Service



Working together for a safer London

HP IDOL solution enables leading police force to better respond to local events

Aware of gaps in its monitoring and usage of social media, the UK's Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) began a trial with HP during the summer of the London Olympics to deploy industry leading social media analytics tools. The result is more effective community engagement, earlier insight into relevant issues, and more accurate analysis of social media sentiment. These insights have benefitted police operations, including intelligence and crime investigation.



Challenge

Concerns with community engagement

On August 6, 2011, rioting broke out in London and the disturbances quickly spread to cities across England, lasting four days and costing £200m in clean-up and policing. A Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) report into the disturbances, “4 Days in August,” found gaps in police intelligence prior to and during the disturbances. It also highlighted concerns with the level of community engagement. At the same time, social media was found to be a contributing factor in the spread of information (and disinformation) between rioters.

MPS recognized it needed to do more to engage local communities and social media channels. More effective engagement could help to prevent future disturbances, while better monitoring would assist in resource planning and proactive engagement, and enable more joined-up intelligence and information across the MPS. As another report into the disturbances put it, “Community engagement is always the first key step to preventing disorder.” To enable community engagement, the Police need to identify and engage with new, community influencers and have more of a proactive approach to filter social media channels.

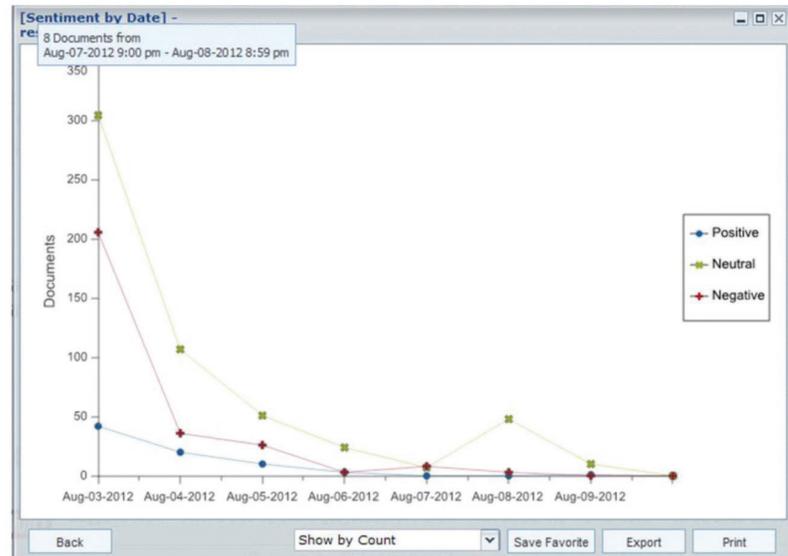
Olympic-sized opportunity

In the summer of 2012, the MPS oversaw the London Olympics and Paralympics Games, the Royal Jubilee, and the annual Notting Hill Carnival. This required an unprecedented level of policing. Aware of the MPS’ 2012 commitments, and its long-term social media ambitions, HP proposed a trial to help better understand and utilize social media analysis (SMA) for community engagement. HP is a key supplier to the UK Police, providing key elements of its IT infrastructure. The SMA trial ran from July to September within two London boroughs, Haringey and Hammersmith and Fulham, with lessons shared across the entire city. The trial helped MPS formulate a long-term strategy for social media and provided insight as to how it could be used to advance community engagement, intelligence gathering, and crime investigation.

Solution

HP IDOL sifting through the data

The HP solution leverages the power of HP IDOL (Intelligent Data Operating Layer) from HP Marketing Optimization to automatically understand the concepts expressed in tweets, news articles, and blogs. It is able to identify trends, themes, and subject adjacencies, automatically sifting through the mass of data. Users are able to gain a real-time understanding of what is capturing the public attention. For the MPS, the solution produced reports during the solution trial on themes, trends, and buzzwords, viewed from a single dashboard; and the dashboard could be customized by each user.



Metropolitan Police

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) is the UK's largest and most influential police force, with 31,000 officers and more than 10,000 support staff. It covers a population of 7.2 million and some of the UK's most high profile, public events.

MPS wanted to ensure the trial could evolve, as required, adding new functionality in response to user demand. Of particular importance was the ability to track a message or topics provided by the MPS Directorate of Media and Communications and to review its impact, penetration, and identify responders. Users were drawn from operational policing roles and the Directorate of Information.

Part of the early focus was on determining what to monitor (the solution covers a vast range of social media, including YouTube, Flickr, LinkedIn, and Facebook). At launch, the trial ingested feeds from 22 social media channels selected by MPS (with eight more added in the first few weeks of the trial), with an emphasis on international, national, and local news feeds, along with local blogs. It would also monitor the London-based Twitter data feed, and assess a user's influencer via a Klout score. All content was Open Source and within the public domain.

As a multi-lingual city, London demanded multi-lingual operational capabilities. To address this need, the Proof-of-Concept offered automated translation. This allowed analysts to interrogate foreign language text in English, with results in English, but while retaining the original foreign language text.

To meet the tight deadlines and ensure a robust infrastructure, HP worked with a long-standing partner, OCSL, to provide HP DL380 Dual CPU Servers and HP 5800A7-48g networking switches to power the trial. In addition, HP also supplied Slate tablet devices to give users mobile access to the SMA (social media analytics) information. This was later extended to users with iPads® and Android devices. A half-day training session was held for all users.

Benefits

Helping address the 'needle in a haystack' problem

The trial was quickly deemed a success and extended into November. The most obvious impact was that, even using selective data ingestion (London area-only tweets and feeds), the HP solution was able to cope with the large volumes of unstructured data generated. On average there were 2,306,796 tweets a day coming from London (July 12 through August 13), with a peak of 3,291,998 on the day of the Olympics opening ceremony.

The automated analysis, and unique contextual 'understanding' that the HP solution enables, highlighted 'known unknowns'—related concepts that analysts are not necessarily searching for. The solution helped to resolve and address the 'find the needle in the haystack' problem.

While the information volumes are small by social media standards, and well within the limits of the HP solution, it would be a daunting task to have users sift through the information manually. Practically speaking, manual reviews could never be completed quickly enough to have an impact.

From this deluge of information, MPS was able to determine new community influencers and gather early insight into relevant issues. It made it possible to generate Community Impact Assessments much faster and with more credibility.

Customer at a glance

Hardware

- HP 2760p Tablet
- HP DL380 dual-CPU servers
- HP 5800A7-48g networking

Software

- HP IDOL
- HP Explore
- HP Social Awareness Dashboard

HP services

- HP Information Management and Analytics Consulting Services

About HP Marketing Optimization

HP Marketing Optimization empowers organizations to understand and engage audiences, reach new customer segments, and deliver dynamic and personal experiences across every channel, including print, web, contact centers, and augmented reality. With a portfolio of industry-leading products, including HP Exstream, HP TeamSite, HP Qfiniti, HP Optimost, and HP Aurasma, marketers can increase revenue, conversion rates, and customer loyalty using the diverse and growing volume of information that powers today's world.

The trial also made a significant contribution to ongoing operations by enabling MPS to:

- Identify a connection between two intelligence targets that had not been known previously
- Identify potential incidents and links much more quickly and accurately than via traditional means
- Ensure proportionate and appropriate operational response to highly sensitive community events
- Identify several unknown potential witnesses to a fatal stabbing
- Forward local tweets concerning community incidents and respond to erroneous tweets
- Help build a glossary of terms to be used to cross-search data.

In general, the solution provided accurate analysis on a near real-time basis versus 24 hours in arrears, which increased:

- Speed of understanding and operational awareness
- Accuracy of assessment leading to better informed operational decisions
- Ease of access to and assessment of public mood and opinion
- The ability to reach more efficient analysis, automatically providing more succinct information and allowing analyst time to be more focused on priorities
- The ability to reach more informed decisions at all levels of operation and command
- Tracking community news updates.

Of particular importance to MPS was the ability to track a message or topic provided by the Directorate of Media and Communications. MPS wanted to review its impact, penetration, and identify those responding to the message. Given the vast number of social media feeds per day, this cannot be done easily at present, yet is highly important to aid the reduction in fear of crime, and in correcting or adjusting messages in the public domain. It would also be possible to identify trending topics in need of a timely and proportionate response.

As an example, during the trial a tweet was detected from someone in the Hammersmith and Fulham community stating that information had been received that females were being attacked in a local park and that police were warning people to stay away from the area. The tweet quickly trended locally, but was in fact totally erroneous; no such statement had been issued from the Police. MPS was able to respond directly to the initial tweet setting the record straight that there was no such warning, but also issuing reassurance and contact information as well as advice to anyone feeling concerned. All of this was achieved during the working day.

Real-time visibility

Looking ahead, the current plan involves refining social media analysis to be viewed by users at the Borough Commanders and Association of chief Police Officers (ACPO) via user-definable dashboards. In addition, MPS is building a series of 'real-time tension indicators' to help commanders take stock of a situation. It is considering linking the dashboard via video link to Special Operations Rooms and canteens so staff can see emerging local and London-wide trends.

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