Big data analytics tracks sentiment on social media

Social media can be very broad and predictions can vary each time. Big data is well placed to analyze these huge volumes of information to deliver actionable insights.

SOCIAL MEDIA affects sentiments. A negative comment or a bad remark can quickly impact brands. Slow response to queries can equally impact impressions and tarnish reputations or blindside you by catching you unaware.

However, monitoring the millions of daily feeds across key social media platforms is not easy. With different types of data and platform tools that have steep learning curves, social media analysis can be onerous for many. It is also the reason why many are turning to Big Data analytics.

Going big on social

"Data analytics is not new. But in the past they were using vertical scale out technology that presented a lot of limitations. It was also costly, so only banks and big companies were able to afford it. Now with big data, parallel processing and new technology innovations, it has become much more affordable," said Patrick Pang, Head of Solution Consulting, JOS.

Case in point, when a telecommunications giant (carrier), with a global footprint, wanted to keep a handle of user sentiment in

Jason Tan, Director, HPE Labs Singapore

Patrick Pang, Head of Solution Consulting, JOS

India and find out ways to compete better in the lucrative market.

Essentially, the carrier wanted to analyze what people are saying about it on Twitter and Facebook. It wanted to monitor sentiments, analyze the social media data and identify key topics that are influencing its customer base.

However, analyzing non-relational data from social media is not easy. Worse is that the carrier wanted to analyze two platforms concurrently. Also, the telecommunications giant wanted to do this continuously.

Orchestrating actionable insights

The carrier chose to take the big data analytics route with HPE Data Orchestration (formerly called HPE Bamboo).

"Previously, companies were not able to take advantage of the data due to limitations to the technology. With technology advancements, organizations are now asking how to turn this big data into actionable insights," said Jason Tan, Director, HPE Labs Singapore.

HPE helped to migrate the relevant Facebook and Twitter data for analysis. The solution digested the data from both feeds concurrently and then delivered Facebook and Twitter Sentiment analysis reports.

These reports helped the carrier to understand how Facebook and Twitter users feel about the company as a brand. It also monitored any key concerns or negative remarks that users had on customer service and connectivity—chief concerns for the users. Based on the results, the carrier is able to gauge how well it is doing against competitive offerings in the market.

In addition, HPE Data Orchestration used MapReduce to find out which hot topics on Facebook and Twitter are influencing users. These helped the carrier to understand the underlying trends and concerns of its users, and create campaigns to address these to boost brand recognition and sales.

All these results were then compiled into a single report for easy reading. The consolidated results helped the telecommunications giant better understand user sentiment, and quickly decide on how to address them moving forward.

Driving conversions

Tan sees Big Data analytics and social media analysis being a natural fit, especially in driving conversions.

"Businesses can leverage big data to drive data marketing. In the past, the conversion rate of marketing has been pretty low. What a lot of organizations are doing today is to look at social media data to get a better understanding of the customer they are targeting and do more accurate segmentation. And with that, they are looking to do more refined marketing push," said Tan.

Meanwhile, Pang sees big data as helping companies to be more responsive over social media without blowing their budgets.

"Social media can be very broad and predictions can vary each time. Big data is well placed to analyze these huge volumes of information to deliver actionable insights. Today companies are able to monitor sentiment in ways that were either was too expensive in the past or involved too much IT work," he added.