THE NEW METRICS + MEASUREMENT: LEVERAGING ENGAGEMENT

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In 2014, I spent a lot of time around soccer fans. I regularly visited the local sports bars, especially the one where LA's official Real Madrid fan club hangs out. I never missed a Champions League game. My friends were constantly sharing with me via email and social media soccer-related websites, articles, and videos highlighting soccer fans and their love of the sport. I posted on blogs, curious to learn more about the sport, and my credit card had many purchases in Brazil in July—the exact time the World Cup was happening there.

Assuming that my smartphone and other devices were collecting all the data associated with the places I went, the people I spoke to, the sites I visited, and even the purchases I made, it could easily be concluded that I am an ardent soccer fan. Now if you know me, you know that this isn't exactly true. Most of the people in my life would say I'm not particularly a fan of sports in general, let alone soccer. However, I was asked to step out of my comfort zone and study sports fans, to understand their passions and how they engage with brands—especially the brands that sponsor players, teams, and events in hopes of giving sports fans experiences that they want. In doing so, I wound up becoming an interesting sort of case study in my own project: I became a de facto soccer fan, based purely on my data trail. Even though there was a specific motivation at play, and even though it was a specific work-related goal that drove me to this madness, the label of "soccer fan" is now a part of my identity that persists today, its remnants visible in the automatically generated recommendations and ads that are served to me online.

My experience is, of course, not unique: each of us increasingly leaves behind trails of data that become crucial in shaping our digital identity. Especially with the proliferation of mobile devices, there has been a radical shift in how we think about, understand, and participate in the world. We are more connected and informed than ever before. Sometimes by permission (but often without our awareness), we funnel our locations, habits,

desires, and selves into a pool of knowledge that every company wants to drink from in order to better understand and serve us.

In fact, marketers, creatives, and nearly everyone else in the media and entertainment ecosystem are doing everything in their power to acquire and understand that data. They want to create relationships with their consumers, so that they remain loyal audience members, customers, and fans who really love their show, their team, their brand. Media producers are trying so hard because our attention is increasingly fragmented across myriad devices (and, of course, the content that appears on each of these devices)—or, as described in our chapter on New Screens, audiences have become ever more "distracted, discerning, and demanding," which makes it that much more important for content creators to attract our attention and foster meaningful relationships. Whether we're getting directions, playing a game, or chatting with our friends, marketers and creatives see these devices as opportunities to connect with us, across all forms of media, to leverage us as their audience and/or customers.

But that's where marketers and creatives are wrong. In fact, they're all too drunk on the seemingly boundless promise of our data, and it's time to sober up. Data is only one part of the equation. New technological advances like big data and machine learning, combined with more direct access to audience sentiment, behaviors, and preferences via social media and over-the-top delivery channels, theoretically give the media and entertainment industry unprecedented insight into what the audience actually wants. But as a professional in the television industry shared with us, "We're drowning in data and starving for insights." No matter how much data you have, it can't quantify all that we are as humans. A more balanced approach is called for: one that blends what we can learn from data with a more human, fan-centric perspective, thus shedding light on the social and cultural context the data is situated within.

Take, for example, the Black Twitter community, a powerhouse on social media. To be clear, this community is not as segmented along lines of traditional racial demographics as the name might suggest: Black Twitter is not solely comprised of Black people, and not every Black person on Twitter is necessarily a member of Black Twitter. Rather, Black Twitter is more of a collection of people displaying, and participating in, a keen understanding of the cultural norms primarily defined by the African American culture. Consider the FOX television show *Empire* and the following insights provided by AIL Research Assistant Brooklyne Gipson:

> Throughout the first season the show has rewarded its followers with a multitude of cultural references that require a pre-existing understanding of the African American community to understand—i.e., Hakeem's desire to perform at the Highline (a place where all rappers perform to signify that they've made it), the art of Kehinde Wiley (a notable black artist) being featured in Luscious' residence, guest appearances of artists as big as Fantasia and stars as well known within the community as Chef Roble. These are all genuine cultural references that serve as prime fodder for discussion amongst this highly social community.

This type of information and understanding of a particular social group interested in a property could never have been discovered through traditional market segmentations that focus on demographics such as age and gender, nor could it have been identified using the current practices of "audience insights" or "customer acquisition" that focus mainly on traditional Key Performance Indicators of engagement that are based on volume analytics (such as the number of shares on a given video or data about those key influencers that can help pump up the volume) or sentiment that quickly provides a pulse of a given group's

reaction.

There are ways to effectively use data to offer insights about engagement while still ensuring that we don't see big data as the magical box with all the answers (or, for that matter, as the monster under the bed). The first step in the right direction is for marketers and creatives to stop thinking of people only in terms of their identities as audience members or customers of a given product. Audiences are seen as an assembly of listeners or spectators, often in a passive position. Customers are regarded in a similar vein, and at the core of each term is this notion of quid pro quo—an exchange of money for goods, services, or experiences.

A better approach is to understand that we all have the potential to become fans because building a relationship is better than a one-night stand. Broadly defined, fans have a continued connection with the property they are passionate about. Some are willing to declare their affinity through engagement, some have an eagerness to learn more about their passion, and some want to connect with others who share their interests. Fans are emotionally linked to the object of their passion, and they experience their passion through their own subjective lenses.

We all start out as audience members, but sometimes, when the combination of factors aligns in just the right way, we become fans. **And most likely, you're not a fan of everything, but I bet you're a fan of something.**

The key to leveraging engagement is not just knowing demographics but understanding the different types of fan motivations and how to turn that data into actionable insights. Even if you and your best friend are fans of the same show, the same team, or the same brand, you're likely passionate for different reasons, which means you'll respond very differently to different situations and content. Each fan engages in different

but discernible ways, and the more we know about their nuanced behaviors, the more value we can create within their media experience. Though traditional demographics may give us basic information about who fans are and where they're located, current methods of understanding and measuring engagement are missing two essential questions: **WHY is a fan motivated and WHAT triggers the fan's behavior?**

At USC's Annenberg Innovation Lab, I've been leading a research group to develop a new model called Leveraging Engagement to better understand fan behaviors and motivations. The Leveraging Engagement model seeks to address the why and what of fan behavior, and it can be used as a framework when designing media strategy—from collecting and analyzing (the right type of) data to creating new content and, ultimately, building stronger, long-term relationships with fans.

WHY Is a Fan Motivated?

At the core of the Leveraging Engagement model are certain *motivators of fan engagement*, which describe the various ways fans approach the objects they are passionate about and the goals that drive their fan behaviors. Building off of Ivan Askwith's *Television 2.0: Reconceptualizing TV as an Engagement Medium,*[2] where he offers an initial framework for thinking about viewer engagement, the Leveraging Engagement model entails a set of motivations that is both inexhaustible and agile in that, as we explore new genres of media—from sports to story universes to music— additional motivations emerge, some of which prove to be more prevalent in certain genres than others. Here are a few examples to illustrate some of the motivators we've seen apply in different fandoms:

In sports, some fans engage through *Identification,*

which we define as strongly associating oneself with a passion and defining oneself as a fan. Being a sports fan connects some fans to the place they call home; for others, their fandom is important because they believe the team they support says something about who they are.

In unscripted entertainment where fans engage with the personality of a celebrity host, the logic of *Advocacy—championing causes on behalf of one's passion and taking positions on issues within the fandom—*shines through, as fans rally to support the celebrity's causes or the positive impact they have on the community. Yet we've also seen fans spark conversations through social media to advocate for their own causes with the hope of inspiring the celebrity host to shine a spotlight on their personal missions.

In music, the majority of music festival fans engage through *Social Connection—participating in a fandom in order to create or deepen relationships with other fans—*in which being around others who love the same music and enjoy singing along or dancing makes the experience.

In superhero story universes, the logic of *Mastery*

manifests via a pronounced interest in *learning and understanding detailed information and stories about one's passion*. Some fans might want to know everything there is to know, whereas others might focus on certain details such as a specific period in time or a deep understanding of the relationships between characters.

Motivators act as lenses through which fans' behaviors and desires to engage with a specific type of content, people, or brands can be understood. They are individual touchpoints that facilitate engagement. A fan might think they have a dominant motivator they gravitate toward in their behavior, but very few, if any, fans exhibit only one of the motivators at any given time in their engagement. Instead, fans are usually engaging through mixtures of these motivators, and common mixtures are recognizable as recurring *fan mindsets*.

For example, in looking at music fans in America, one of the fan mindsets we've identified is the *Vocalist*. As the name implies, *Vocalists* listen to and often sing music frequently, most often in the car, with whatever type of mood they're in being the driver of the choice of song or genre. They often look for new music to listen to and enjoy learning about music and musicians, and they'll gladly purchase albums or other products artists might offer. However, they don't go out of their way to attend concerts or festivals, even though they are more likely than most music fans to play and create music. The *Vocalist* mindset is a combination of *Play*, *Identification*, and *Creation* (see Motivators Table for definitions), but they are not motivated by *Social Connection* or *Advocacy*, as music is a personal journey for them.

In contrast, fans operating with the *Mixologist* mindset listen to

MOTIVATORS	*an agile and inexhaustible list of what drives fan behavior*
ENTERTAINMENT	enjoying the overall experience and atmosphere surrounding one's passion
SOCIAL CONNECTION	integrating oneself in a fandom in order to create or deepen relationships with other fans
MASTERY	consistently learning and understanding detailed information and stories about one's passion
IMMERSION	losing oneself in the parallel universe surrounding one's passion by shifting one's focus from real life
IDENTIFICATION	strongly associating oneself with a passion and defining oneself as a fan
PRIDE	reflecting one's fanship in outward appearance and public behavior
ADVOCACY	championing on behalf of one's passion and taking positions on issues within the fandom
PLAY	participating (virtually or in real life) in activities related to one's passion
CREATION	expressing interest in the making of the original subject, or making original content/media related to one's passion
EXPLORATION	seeking to discover new points of interest related to one's passion and/or be in the know about what's new and cutting edge related to the passion
COLLECTION	striving to own a complete set of some specific objects or other items related to one's passion

music just as frequently as the *Vocalists*, but their passion is tied closely to friends, family, and other fans who are eager to discuss and share their knowledge about music and musicians. It is the feeling of being connected to a community of fans that matters most, regardless of whether it's in person at music festivals or online via fan sites. The *Mixologist* mindset is a combination of *Social Connection*, *Advocacy*, and *Exploration*.

In our research, we've seen similar mindsets emerge in fandoms focused on scripted entertainment properties, as well as among fans who are passionate about unscripted entertainment. There are fans of transmedia universes who are just as obsessed as soccer *Connoisseurs*, eager to master everything there is to know about the history, characters, locations, and actions inherent to a specific storyworld and share their knowledge with others. However, even if fans have the same motivators, their particular fan mindsets (or the combination of motivators they're exhibiting at any one moment) may lead them to manifest their passion via unique behaviors.

For example, in one of the unscripted entertainment properties we've studied, the mindsets of *Do-Gooder* and *Supporter* are both motivated primarily by **Advocacy** and **Social Connection**. Yet the *Do-Gooder* is inspired to advocate for a cause that has personally impacted them and chooses to connect with like-minded supporters through social media, especially Facebook; in contrast, *Supporters* passionately support causes that the celebrity personality of the program supports, and they admire the celebrity for the impact *she* can have on ordinary people that they identify with—people like them.

The more we conduct research across sports, music, and other forms of entertainment with multiple teams, stories, and brands, the more we see how the broad definitions of the Leveraging Engagement motivators can be used to understand fans, and how they can be combined into multiple mindsets situated in a variety

of contexts to better illuminate why fans behave the way they do.

WHAT Triggers the Fan's Behavior?

While most fans may adopt one of these fan mindsets most of the time, they may shift to other mindsets according to changes in their unique **situational triggers**. These triggers, which can take the form of tangible objects or discrete actions, can be determined based on a number of factors:

- **Where is the fan?**
- **When does the engagement happen?**
- **What does the fan know?**
- **Whom does the fan engage with, and how?**
- **How does the fan feel, whether it is a physical or an emotional sensation?**

Understanding the objects and actions that inspire certain fan mindsets will help media producers create content and activities that can help these fans engage more deeply with a given team, story, or brand.

Let's return for a moment to my experience as a soccer fan. At first glance, you might see me as just an audience member, a spectator of the sport. The truth is that, especially after my experiences researching soccer fandom, I actually am a fan of soccer. However, I'm not your typical fan, and my experience of being a fan of soccer has been short-lived so far. In other words, I'm a noob when it comes to this type of fandom, though some of the soccer fans who adopt more inclusive mindsets have embraced me as one of their own.

One of the soccer fan mindsets that emerged in our study was that of the *Follower*. *Followers* are not likely to be aligned with

any of the motivators we've identified except *Entertainment*, the most fleeting form of engagement sparked largely by a desire to strengthen personal connections with friends and family. *Followers* enjoy watching, especially during close games or exciting finishes, but they are not deeply invested in being fans. The second most common mindset for women to adopt, the *Follower* mindset often represents the mothers and wives of those who are more avid soccer fans; *Followers* could also be the fans who are turned off by some of the crazier elements of sports fandom such as violence, over-the-top cheering, and poor sportsmanship. They also don't care much about understanding details and don't possess strong opinions, often because they just don't know that much about the history, the players, or the stats.

Even a year out from my entry into soccer fandom, I identify as a *Follower*. I was uncomfortable just starting to watch the game on my own. After all, watching it on my own wasn't very entertaining; all I saw was a group of men either standing around aimlessly or running from one end of the field to the next, which didn't strike me as particularly exciting. It wasn't until I went to a sports bar with a friend whose knowledge of the players, the history, and the game far outweighed my own that I started to look at it from a different angle. His insights helped to fill in the blank stares that I would have given the TV if I'd been alone. It was during these initial viewings that I learned the basics of the game and began to understand why soccer is the world's favorite sport.

However, new triggers push you to engage in new ways, and thus your mindset (and your behavior) can change when you move from one situation to another. Traveling to the World Cup was one of those triggers that exposed me to more information and buzz about soccer. I also had the opportunity to socialize with devoted fans and attend specialized, large gatherings that

shifted me from a *Follower* to a *Mascot* during the World Cup. *Mascots* are loud, high-energy, high-emotion, fun-loving fans. They get wild when matches get exciting. And they have a great time being fans. They love stories about the sport, but they don't pay much attention to statistics and tactics. Most importantly, *Mascots* are often partisan to a specific team or nationality.

One instance in particular illustrates the shift I underwent in moving from a *Follower* mentality to that of a *Mascot*. Before going to the World Cup, I had spent a lot of time in Los Angeles with fans in the local Real Madrid club. The female fans in LA had told me all about Cristiano Ronaldo, the star player for this team, so when I headed to the World Cup I brought my favorite t-shirt featuring Ronaldo, who was playing for his home country, Portugal. Now, if you recall World Cup 2014, one of the best games was between Portugal and USA where, in the last second, Portugal scored the tying goal. We watched this game in a bar surrounded by American fans, crammed in like sardines; the energy of the room was electric. Fans were waving American flags and every few minutes the entire bar would chant, "I believe, I believe that, I believe that we, I believe that we can win," or, "USA! USA! USA!" I had hung around soccer fans throughout the year so by the time I made it to Rio, I could hold my own in terms of following what was happening in the game and who the different players were. I found myself becoming caught up in the moment and, in the process, my behavior changed. I'd gone to the bar wearing my Cristiano Ronaldo T-shirt covered by my USA sweatshirt. Immersed in the experience, thoroughly entertained, my new motivators were *Identification* and *Pride*. It was HOT in that bar, but in that context and among that crowd, there was no way in hell I was taking off my USA sweatshirt and revealing any affinity for a player on the other team. I was right in there with everyone else, chanting loudly and feeling the pain of

being robbed of our victory at the last second. In that moment, I was a *Mascot* of the US team, and I still follow them today.

Enter on Your Own Terms

With so many similarities between the two mindsets I just described, one might draw the surface-level conclusion that there is a hierarchical ranking into which we can slot various fan groups. The media and entertainment industry widely believes that 80% of its revenue comes from the 20% of its audience frequently referred to as "superfans." Some might not consider *Followers* true fans; in contrast, *Connoisseurs* could be classified as superfans. But this sort of taxonomy papers over the opportunities that each mindset offers in an engagement strategy, and you're most likely leaving money on the table by not catering to the nuanced behaviors each mindset demonstrates. A hierarchical view also suggests that you have to start out as a *Follower* and work your way through multiple mindsets in a specific order on your way to becoming a superfan.

This is not what we've found. In fact, looking at fans through the lens of our two core questions—**WHY is a fan motivated and WHAT triggers the fan's behavior**—reveals there are multiple points of entry into a fan community, with multiple versions of meaningful engagement.

Take for example the figure shown on page 23. This model offers insight on the pathways of potential mindset shifts for soccer fans.

As shown by one of the black bidirectional arrows, *Patriots* can transition into *Explorers* when they start to get excited about playing soccer, fantasy soccer, or other soccer-related games.

Shifting from this mindset in the other direction, *Explorers* can "retire" into a life of *Patriotism* when real-life circumstances demand more time and focus, and engagement levels have to dial back (or at least shift focus) as a result.

Now, take a look at one of the gray bidirectional arrows. *Observers* don't usually become *Mascots* without "leveling up" socially into the *Follower* mindset first, but they can when the party atmosphere is silliest (at big international tournaments, for example). Moving in the other direction, most *Mascots* have too much single-team focus (rooted in *Identification* and *Advocacy*) to step back into a role as an *Observer*, but their loyalty isn't as strong as that of a *Patriot*, so they just might

Soccer Fan Mindsets
(black arrows indicate more likely mindset shifts)
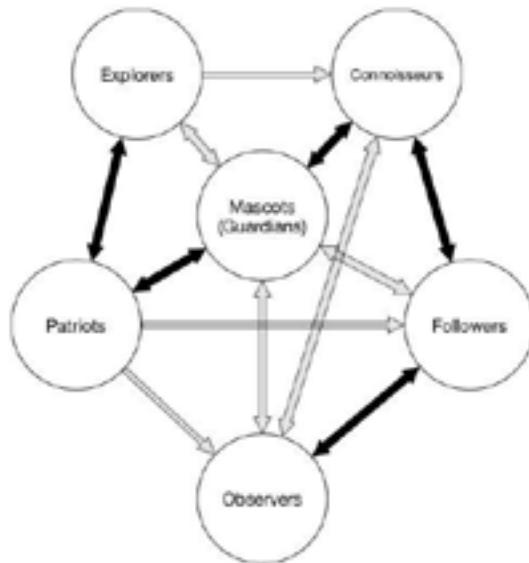
make that move if their team is bad for a long stretch of time.

When we move away from using terms such as "segmentation" and "profiles" that rigidly relegate fans to specific groups and instead turn the discussion towards "motivators," "mindsets," and "situational triggers," we begin to operate within a framework that encourages agility and evolution while also recognizing the importance and complexity of each fan, no matter how they like to engage.

Using the Leveraging Engagement Model to Understand Data

Fans are increasingly exercising greater autonomy with respect to their media choices, prompting industry leaders to seek new, refined ways to engage the majority of the audience, all the way down to the niche communities. However, if your goal is to better understand fans in order to capitalize on that part of the value chain, stop right now. You will fail miserably. If you plan to leverage data to better understand fans, the first rule to adhere to is this: **Fans are not a commodity. They are motivated to participate for many different reasons (and often not just to consume the entertainment).** Many fans understand that you are interested in them, but frequently they feel misunderstood and think of the relationship as one-sided.

How can we use the Leveraging Engagement model to develop new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are measurable?

How do we successfully make data actionable to ensure it is a valuable asset for a company while, at the same time, respecting fans and trying to better understand them the way they want to be understood?

The Internet has offered fans a new voice to share feedback with creators and media executives on what they like and don't like. For example, it keeps track of what fans are willing to purchase, and sentiment analysis of online data has proven to be a useful tool in taking the pulse of a specific time or situation. All of that data is there to use, but it's important to understand that data doesn't make us who we are. We shape the role data plays in our lives, and it is up to us to effectively and ethically make meaning from it. As such, data science should be a key practice in your company (and if it's not already, make it so), because it is essential to the craft of supporting better decision-making. Similarly, as we consider the potential of new metrics and measurement, we would do well to start with basic questions about our data-related practices.

What data should we collect to leverage engagement with fans?

We're constantly bombarded with stories about how much data is available, but when it comes to data and the challenges of interpreting it, guidance is definitely needed. The first step is to know what data should be collected. The worst thing you can do is to open up the door and let everything in. If you hear yourself saying, "Well, you never know when we'll need that particular data—better to have it than to not have it," then pause and review the questions you want answered. Media companies cannot gain essential insights without first knowing what questions to ask and then collecting the right data to seek the answers they need. Always keep in mind exactly what question you want answered, and be ready to return often to that question and reflect on whether it's still the right one. If you make the mistake of collecting too much, then you'll be in the same situation as so many others who are "drowning in data and starving for insights."

The data that is necessary to better understand why a fan is motivated and what triggers fan behavior is not limited to one type of data set. For one thing, it's crucial to expand beyond standard volumetric analysis of social media likes or shares; similarly, while aggregate data may be clean, it can't provide the depth and breadth of information that would allow your data science team to track users across multiple platforms and conduct semantic and textual analysis to gain deeper insights into behavioral patterns. A mixed methods approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative data helps to better understand fans. In fact, your company probably doesn't yet have all the data necessary to truly see the full answer to these complicated questions, and relying only on proprietary data isn't utilizing the power of the Internet— or businesses similar to your own—that also are trying to reach the same audience. These bigger questions are driving natural scaling beyond institutional boundaries, which in turn changes how we need to do business. We're trying to communicate, but we're looking in the wrong place (or we're not looking in enough places). It's high time to consider new strategies for data collection and analysis—ones in which answers are found by moving away from verticals to explore new horizontal structures. What follows are a few best practices that can help guide us as we develop these new approaches.

1. **Standardize your data collection across both internal and external partners**
   It is important to look at social media in correlation with other types of data in order to effectively answer questions such as the following:

   - Are certain fans who engage through certain motivators more likely to contribute to, participate in, and influence spikes in social media activity, and if so, at what points in time?
   - By looking at personality traits common across multiple fan mindsets, can we determine

whether certain types of fans cluster together to discuss certain types of content? If so, what is the content?

- What triggers fans' discussions? Is it possible for brands to trigger substantial/meaningful discussion with fans?

Bringing together multiple data sets is the first step towards answering these questions, but in order to successfully do so it's imperative to standardize data collection so each set can truly interface with and be meaningfully linked to others. When we studied a celebrity-driven unscripted entertainment property, we were looking across multiple sources of data, from the show website to the celebrity website to Facebook to survey data, yet because the data sets from these different sources were not standardized it was difficult to identify relationships across the whole.

Requests for data collection come in many forms—web traffic, social networks, mobile phones, and Nielsen, to name a few. Yet often, these data sets are owned and/or managed by multiple teams within a company or even external partners, and often the protocols for each group are different. With so much data being collected, there needs to be a priority on standardizing data collection, such as including time stamps, fixing broken video links, and even formatting across all data sets.

2. Step outside your house

Want to better understand your fans? Then step outside "your metaphorical house." One of the filters we incorporated into our data collection was

"Authored by the Brand" versus "Not Authored by the Brand," with sub-filters that included things like content properties, characters, artists or team members, events, writers, and culture. This became an interesting lens through which to look at the data. We found that data created and "Authored by the Brand" vastly outnumbered that "Not Authored by the Brand" in terms of pure volume, which is not surprising, considering the amount of posts and Twitter campaigns pushed out with trailers, celebrity endorsements, and other mechanisms to generate buzz and build momentum.

Complementary to "Authored by the Brand" content, the content most reshared was celebrity posts and tweets. Even though these messages were "Not Authored by the Brand," they helped bring additional fans into the conversation—fans who may have been following the actor, artist, or musician who was offering their endorsement much more closely than they were the property under consideration.

A majority of the "Authored by the Brand" and celebrity endorsement conversations happened on Twitter and Facebook. The content shared offered provoked minimal conversation or discussion that was simple at best. The motivators fans mainly engaged through were a combination of *Entertainment* (with celebrities posting text and images like "*On set. Behind the scene. this set is amazing!*" or "*Awesome mix, bad ass soundtrack*") and **Social Connection** (with celebrities again posting text and images like "*Circled back with some ol' friends*" or "*Does anyone have a WITTY CAPTION for this fun look back pic?*").

Though their contributions were not as often reshared, fans who spread messages ended up being motivated just the same with comments like, "I was waiting for this." It might just be the affordances of these two platforms, Twitter with its 140-character limit and Facebook framed by a quick-to-digest newsfeed doesn't offer the right space to foster richer conversations.

The conversations and context on the "Not Authored by the Brand" pages and sites, some found on Twitter and Facebook but majority found on sites like Reddit, provided a more nuanced understanding of what triggers fans to engage with the property. Reddit offered longer, more in depth posts and the motivators *Creation*, *Advocacy*, and *Mastery* emerged more often than on the other two platforms. For example, a post on Reddit might share a potential theory of the story unfolding on television and ask for thoughts and feedback from the community.

3. **Foster interdisciplinary teams and mixed methods when seeking answers**
   It's important that a research analytics insights team consists of both qualitative and quantitative experts working together to develop the right set of questions to answer, because this shared expertise often helps draw deeper meaning out of volumetric, textual, and predictive analytics. Volumetric analysis is most prevalent in analytics today and allows us to identify specific performance metrics, such as the amount of time spent viewing content along with numbers of comments, shares, and likes. A volumetric analysis helps determine problem

areas where the performance metrics clearly dip. However, there can be a huge amount of signal in this noise of volumetric analysis, so additional methods are required.

Sentiment analysis has been widely used to begin addressing the signal-to-noise ratio and provide a quick way to assess the attitude of a conversation by identifying the text as positive, negative, or neutral. However, previous research at the lab[3] has identified the pitfalls to this, especially with inaccuracies related to evaluating language features such as sarcasm.

Advanced approaches to text analysis using natural language processing can help provide insights into motivations, behaviors, and situational triggers for engaging with content, people, or brands. In order to conduct such semantic analysis, text generated from, for example, Facebook comments are reviewed as a syntactic structure with meaning and, whether it is a post or a comment on a post, the content is looked at with relational understanding. This type of method requires an analyst to first manually code the data in order to train learning algorithms to solve regression problems and help predict a specific performance metric—which proves that the understanding you derive from your data is only as good as your team. The more your team understands the content, people, or brands they are researching, the more they can provide the correct information to the machine that is learning how to support their efforts. And the best way for your team to understand the content, people, or brands is to look at things through multiple lenses,

whether by watching the programming or listening to the music, interviewing the fans, or personally trying out what a brand has to offer. The more they are equipped with well-rounded knowledge of the different contexts associated with the content, people, or brands, the more likely they'll be to grasp patterns that are not always right at the surface when looking at the data.

Mapping the New Metrics and Measurement

So what can we say about this new analytical landscape in which we have all of these exciting new tools for data analysis and yet struggle to make sense of what to do with it all? When you move beyond volumetric and sentiment analytics that at best are descriptive but provide little in the way of actionable insights, we begin to explore more semantic analytics that offer new insights into behavioral and textual analytics.

With this, language and motivation become increasingly important. Language is created by people, and it differs depending on the culture it is situated within. Take, for example, the many different ways people talk about soccer (or football if you're from a part of the world other than the United States, where football has a completely different meaning). People, especially in mediated communication, hardly ever use proper English. They are complex and metaphorical in how they share meaning, often using slang and jargon, emojis, and imagery specific to the culture. And the minute we try to figure it out, let alone collect data and train a machine, culture evolves and people mix it up again. As if the challenges of trying to model machines to understand the nuances of textual language weren't enough, we now face rapid developments in terms of emojis, images, audio, and video (and all the motivations, representations, and understandings that are bound up with

them), which will likely become increasingly more complex in years to come.

Simply put, the mechanisms we rely on in collecting, processing, and making sense of data have the capacity to directly shape the rewards we get in return. Apply, for example, thoughtful contextualization and a human touch to the process of training your data models, and you're far more likely to derive a more deeply nuanced, contextualized, and human picture of fans, gaining unique insights as to their mindsets, tastes, proclivities, and interests. These insights can help you better understand and appreciate what fans value—and how you, in turn, can value the fans.