

Study shows tweets about COVID-19 have turned from fear to anger



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(NEW YORK) -- It's no secret people use social media as an outlet for their emotions on just about every topic, but a [new study](#) from Singapore's Nanyang Technological University show people are also using it to vent their frustrations over COVID-19. According to university scientists, who analyzed global Twitter traffic based on the keywords "Wuhan, corona, nCov, and covid," over a fifth of tweets about COVID-19 are now angry ones. Perhaps its no surprise, as lockdowns in this country continue, mixed with mixed messages about the virus and safety.

Back in January, by comparison, when the awareness of the virus was just beginning, researchers say their analysis of 20 million tweets show that 60% of them expressed "fear and uncertainty" as the pandemic started. However, as people realized "two weeks to stop the spread" turned into months of lockdown, the NTU team say tweets got more frustrated in nature, evidenced by many more "swear words" in the mix of collected data.

Part of the blame, Professor May O. Lwin notes in a press release, is ineffective communication from governments to their people. "The rapid evolution of global COVID-19 sentiments within a short period of time points to a need to address increasingly volatile emotions through strategic communication by government and health authorities," Lwin says, "as well as responsible behavior by netizens before they give rise to 'unintended outcomes.'"

That being said, the latest data is also showing a new trend: hope. While angry tweets are simmering, posts expressing "joy and gratitude" are also rising, with posts about community spirit, and key words like "good news" and "feel good" growing. These come from the millions of patients who have recovered from the disease, and from celebrating kind acts that have occurred in communities amid the crisis.

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