Text Analysis of Emojis

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Abstract:

Emojis are digital images and icons that are typically used to liven a communication or convey emotion, commonly in texts, tweets and advertisements. In contrast to its use in social media, emoji use in the human trafficking context, especially human trafficking advertisements, is in place of words and as leet characters. In this talk we demonstrate the use of distributional semantic models, in particular Word2Vec, to the emoji space by treating emojis as words. As a result of this translation, we are able to cluster emojis through their use and placement and find a ‘synonym’ list for human trafficking emojis. This work is important as it starts to peel away layers of intended obfuscation in human trafficking communication to help expose trafficker intent and methodology.