

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention addresses Ebola misinformation with text analytics

The challenge

Part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) serves the mission of protecting public health. As pandemics emerge, the CDC relies on analytics models to measure and track the spread of diseases to understand their pathology and societal impact.

During the recent Ebola crisis, the CDC found itself waging a battle against misinformation and misperception about the disease. It was critical to quickly identify and track public concerns and conspiracy theories so the organization could respond with accurate, relevant information. With its traditional analytical models and thousands of social media posts and messages streaming every minute, the CDC was unable to process and mine this data in real time.

An effective solution would:



Analyze thousands of streaming social posts and messages in real time



Quickly identify and categorize prominent themes in incoming data



Examine conversational data thoroughly enough to surface misinformation

The solution

Conversation about contracting the virus spiked dramatically shortly after a patient tested positive for Ebola in the United States. Amid the outbreak and chaos, the CDC used Luminoso to categorize and analyze social media data about the disease. The organization was now able to identify, triage, and publicly address misinformation as it emerged.

Three major themes – Ebola in Africa, Ebola outside of Africa, and topical mentions of the disease in the zeitgeist – emerged throughout the CDC's analysis. Concerns the organization discovered included unfounded fears and conspiracies about the treatment, transmission, and spread of Ebola. With Luminoso, the CDC surfaced this false information in real time, quickly planning an effective response to address and dispel dangerous news.

The benefits



Collected, triaged, and analyzed streaming social data over 6 weeks



Quickly surfaced previously unknown misinformation to take quick action



Identified, addressed, and educated the public about top concerns

With Luminoso, the CDC surfaced misinformation about Ebola in real time, quickly planning an effective response to address and dispel dangerous news.

The results

With Luminoso, the CDC quickly surfaced and addressed major public theories and worries in the following categories:



Treatment: Cure and home remedy theories were twice as prevalent as those about vaccines.



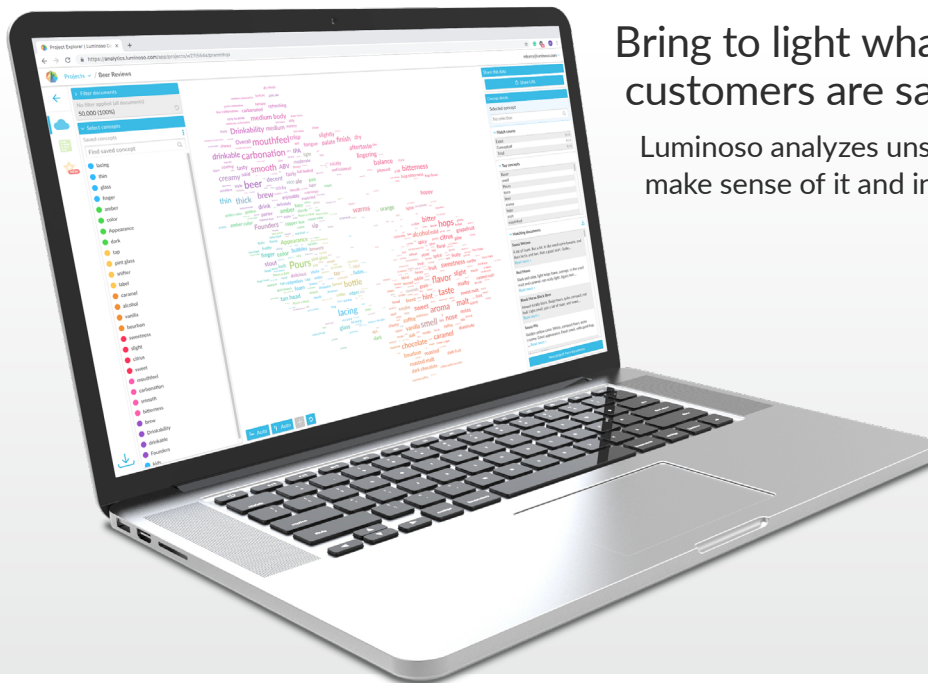
Mutation: Discussion centered on Ebola mutating into an airborne or animal-borne illness.



Transmission: Bodily fluids was the most discussed source of Ebola transmission, followed by monkeys, mosquitoes, and surfaces.



Conspiracies: Ebola was rumored to be a form of government population control, a biological weapon, and a US-owned patent.



Bring to light what your customers are saying

Luminoso analyzes unstructured text in minutes, to accurately make sense of it and inspire your organization's actions.

Luminoso turns unstructured text data into business-critical insights. Using common-sense artificial intelligence to understand language, we empower organizations to discover, interpret, and act on what people are telling them. Requiring little setup, maintenance, training, or data input, Luminoso combines world-leading natural language understanding technology with a vast knowledge base to learn words from context – like humans do – and accurately analyze text in minutes, not months. Our software provides native support in over a dozen languages, so leaders can explore relationships in data, make sense of feedback, and triage inquiries to drive value, fast. Luminoso is privately held and headquartered in Boston, MA.

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