Humans and machines team up to predict Brexit campaign result by analysing UK social chatter

LONDON, 30th May 2016 - With less than a month to go before Britain makes one of the most important decisions in its history, a group of researchers and technology innovators, the SENSEI consortium, have teamed up to hear what is being said on social media. By applying a unique combination of advanced technology and human intervention, they will provide real-time analysis of social media chatter around the EU Referendum vote in a way that makes commercial sense for commentators, politicians, pundits and businesses alike.

In fact, anybody who has a vested interest in predicting or understanding the outcome of the public debate, and wants to hear what is being said, should pay attention now.

The SENSEI project is a pan-European, public/private partnership set up to make sense of the millions of blog posts and social media conversations that occur every day and it has the ultimate goal of adding real commercial value to this research. Websays and SIS Lab (University of Trento), the creators of www.sense-eu.info are two of the leading industry and research groups within the SENSEI consortium, which includes the University of Essex, Aix Marseille and Sheffield as partners.

The **SENSEI project** will demonstrate how a powerful combination of technology-driven search engines, combined with a unique qualitative approach using human intervention, can fundamentally change the way we understand social media chatter and how it can be applied commercially to help commentators to understand what is being said.

And they have form: Websays recently used these techniques to predict the outcome of the last Spanish general election, with stunning success.

According to **Prof. Giuseppe Riccardi** of the University of Trento and **SENSEI's Project Co-ordinator:** "This is a really exciting project for us. We are a consortium of European academic and technology institutions who have been working with our partners to significantly advance summarization technology and unlock the potential of online listening to give it real sense and value."

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Prof. Massimo Poesio from the **University of Essex,** part of the SENSEI project, said: "The recent UK general election illustrated just how wrong traditional pollsters can be. Adding a human element to a traditionally data-based exercise gives us a far better qualitative analysis of commentary and we think this has real commercial applications for anybody who really wants to stay on top of the nations' online conversations."

Dr. Hugo Zaragoza, founder of **Websays** and a worldwide expert in opinion analytics said: "There are others out there who will be listening to social media, but we are the only ones with this deep combination of technology and human analysis through machine learning. We think this can add real value to business and help us to predict outcomes better than anyone else."

SENSEI will be analysing the online conversation up to and beyond the EU Referendum and the results of its analysis can be found at http://www.sense-eu.info

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About SENSEI
The SENSEI project is funded by the FP7 programme of the European Commission (2013-2016). The SENSEI project aims to create technology and services to analyse human conversations from diverse media sources (eg speech, social media etc.) Academic and business partners at SENSEI are extracting value from human conversations and supporting end-users, analysts and decision makers in dealing with massive conversation streams. For more information and details visit the consortium website at http://www.sensei-conversation.eu

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