

"#MeToo means so much more" - Ellie Frymire

By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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On day 2 of Design Indaba 2019 communications designer, Ellie Frymire talked about her thesis, *#MeToo - An exploration of tweets using cluster analysis*.

She mentioned a women's march that took place on 21 January 2017, regarding women's rights, specifically women's reproductive rights. While those that marched on the day were angry, Frymire said that it's difficult to share your personal experiences in this type of format. "Who are these people, what are their stories?" She wondered.

On 15 October, American actress and liberal activist Alyssa Milano said something very powerful:

“ If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet. pic.twitter.com/k2oeCiUf9n—
Alyssa Milano (@Alyssa_Milano) [October 15, 2017](#) ”

"Thousands of people liked, replied and responded to this original tweet and a million more used the hashtag #metoo, but I wasn't focused on the magnitude of this problem, I wanted to know who these people are and what are their stories; I wanted to know, what are people really saying when they use the hashtag #metoo?"



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The reason Frymire is so passionate about the #metoo movement stems from personal experience. She showed some photos of her best six friends.

"As six smart, talented, ambitious young women, we've had our fair share of experiences. One of us almost lost a job for speaking up about sexism in the workplace... and more than one of us has been sexually assaulted.

We are not the exception to the rule and because I know our stories so intimately, I can understand the impact of these experiences."

“ A tweet is not just a number. It is a real and lasting experience for that person. The hashtag #metoo means so much more. ”



Ellie Frymire

In her research, Frymire started with 1.4bn tweets from an advanced search page over a six-month period after Milano's tweet. She outlined them on a timeline, where she noticed a few spikes on the dates of major national events or happenings and looked for words within each tweet using a process called unsupervised machine learning.

After analysing 1.4bn tweets and 26 million unique words within these tweets, the result was 425 clusters of tweets. "425 natural groupings within the data based on word patterns within, and the beauty of this was that it was an unbiased

solution.”

The top words in each cluster revealed five major themes in this collection:

- Political clusters, the top words of which included trump, vote and president (top words)
- Workplace clusters, the top words of which included workplace, changing and empowered
- Angry clusters, the top words of which included the F-word, disgusting and behaviour
- Conversation clusters, the top words of which included disgust, story and change
- Uplifting clusters, the top words of which included strong, courage and love



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One of most popular tweets in the uplifting cluster was, again, by Milano:

“ One tweet has brought together 1.7 million voices from 85 countries. Standing side by side, together, our movement will only grow. [#MeToo](#)— Alyssa Milano (@Alyssa_Milano) [October 24, 2017](#) ”

“She tweeted this a week after her initial tweet and she’s not wrong, but I want to make sure those voices aren’t just counted, I want to make sure those voices are heard, because I am one of those voices... You may be one of those voices.

“I think it’s important for each of us to find power and growth in this movement.”

For more info on Frymire, go to DesignIndaba.com.

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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