

The Top #MRX Twitter Influencers – July 2014

Ray Poynter, NewMR, August 2014

In July I used Twitter to ask who the top market research influencers on Twitter are. I was quickly taken to task for asking such an unstructured question, so I narrowed the question to users of #MRX for market research and set about looking at it in two ways:

1. Simply tabulating the shout outs in Twitter.
2. Asking the data miners and regular observers to give us their take on the question.

This document pulls together the findings. The core week was July 11 to 18, but different people have responded in slightly different ways.

This report has the following elements:

- Shout outs
- Top #MRX links
- Textifter
- ColourText
- NodeXL
- Digression on 'Influence'
- Summary

Most of the people involved in the project have also prepared separate, more in depth, sets of analyses and these are well worth a read.

Shout outs

This list is based on asking people via the #MRX tag to shout out who they thought was the most influential. In pulling the list together I have removed people who retweeted themselves where I have spotted it 😊

I was surprised at how short the list was, but I was not surprised by the top two names.

- | | |
|----|----------------|
| 1 | @lennyism |
| 2 | @tomderuyck |
| 3 | Disqualified |
| 4 | @Colinstrong |
| 4 | @LoveStats |
| 6 | @jhenning |
| 6 | @joelrubinson |
| 6 | @kristofdewulf |
| 6 | @1sue3 |
| 10 | @jonpuleston |
| 10 | @researchlive |
| 10 | @tomewing |
| 10 | @TomHCAnderson |
| 10 | @erica_dfirst |
| 10 | @Edward04 |

Number 3 is disqualified since that was me, the person who chose the timing and asking the question.

What does this list represent? It mostly represents the views of about 40 heavy users of #MRX – i.e. the people who noticed the request and bothered to shout out responses. It is the view of the people central to the discussion.

Top #MRX Links

Jeffrey Henning regularly prepares lists of the most **shared links** using the #MRX tag which he makes available via the GreenBookBlog ([here is an example](#)). Below is a special version Jeffrey produced for this report.

Rank	Twitter Account	% of Top 100 Stories
1	@Euromonitor	34%
2	@researchlive	16%
3	@tomderuyck	14%
4	@DarrenMarkNoyce	12%
4	@thomasjohne	12%
6	@EffectiveResrch	10%
6	@lennyism	10%
6	@MRAmrX	10%
6	@RayPoynter	10%
6	@TweetMRS	10%
11	@JaneFrostMRS	9%
11	@RandSamman	9%
13	@IpsosMORI	8%
13	@kristofdewulf	8%
15	@1sue3	7%
15	@BoltMR	7%
15	@visioncritical	7%
18	@JMortonMR	6%
18	@surveyanalytics	6%

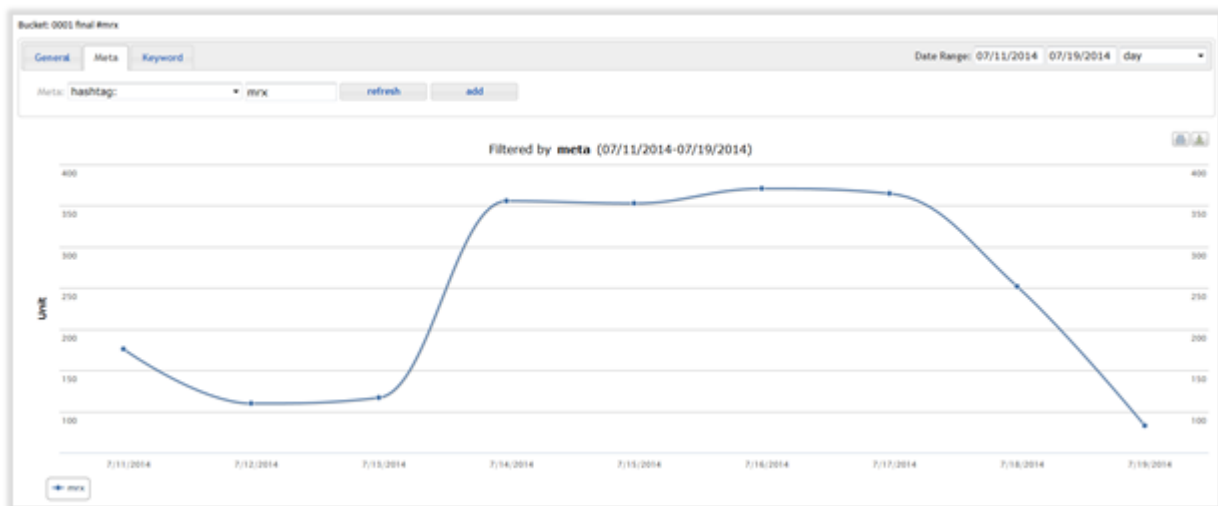
The table shows the top 100 links that were shared (retweeted) the most, (using the #MRX tag during the period July 11 to 18). The numbers reflect who was sharing the top 100 links. For example, Euromonitor were involved in 34% of the top 100. For some accounts, they were publishing new links to Twitter, links

which due to their influence rapidly joined the Top 100 stories; other accounts were simply retweeting popular stories.

The top two names from the Shout Out list are in this list, 6 for Lenny Murphy and 3 for Tom De Ruyck. But several of the top Shout Out names do not make Jeffrey's list. In the case of Colin Strong, Tom Ewing, and Jon Puleston this may reflect the importance of their tweets versus their frequency, and for people like Annie Pettit (@LoveStats) and Joel Rubinson it may reflect a focus on sharing their own thoughts, rather than links that others are also sharing. Of course, the list also reflects people's activity during that particular week.

Texifter

Stu Shulman of Texifter started his analysis by using the GNIP Power Track to pull 7,268 with MRX in the tweet, between July 11 and 19, 2014, narrowing this to 3,109 which used the tag #MRX. The chart below shows the distribution over time.



The distribution confirms that market researchers tweet much less at the weekend, and Fridays are much quieter than Monday to Thursday.

The top ten usernames are shown below.

Top values for: **username:**

1 of 97

Meta Value	Total	Filter
Euromonitor	84	
RayPoynter	72	
thomasjohne	64	
MRXblogs	57	
MRAmrx	50	
DJS_FMCG	43	
DarrenMarkNoyce	42	
DJSResearch	42	
LRWonline	41	
lennyism	39	

As with Jeffrey Henning’s list, Euromonitor tops the list. One of the interesting entries is MRXblogs, which is an unmoderated bot operated by Annie Pettit which monitors a variety of MR related blogs.

Texifter gathered a wider set of MRX related tweets to examine how many of them were related to market research. This process included hand coding almost 11,000 items. This analysis is reported in a video [“Hashtag MRX Influencers”](#).

The analysis identified six users with more than 100,000 followers who had used #MRX – but they were talking about #MrX, a witness in South Africa at the Commission looking into the shootings striking miners in Marikana. Texifter stress the need to involve humans in the process of defining rules to eliminate false positives.

Arguably the account with the largest number of followers and relevant #MRX tweets is @DrRKayGreen – although these are probably her responding to people who have retweeted her and added the #MRX tag.

ColourText

ColourText have also adopted a much larger and more sophisticated approach to the project (adapting an approach they used in 2012 with Research-Live to help identify influence in and around market research) and you can [read their take on #MRX influence on their website](#).

ColourText noted that market researchers were not the only users of the #MRX tag, highlighting mountain biking and Bollywood movies (to which we must add periodic use by the fans of One Direction and people commenting on the inquiry into the Marikana mine shootings in South Africa). This point from ColourText is a good reminder that with social media research data cleaning is an essential feature.

ColourText used a similar timeframe to the other people quoted in this report, in their case July 11 to July 28.

The table below shows Twitter influence, using the #MRX tag in July 2014 and compares that with 2012. Whilst some of the 2012 top names are still near the top, there are plenty of new names.

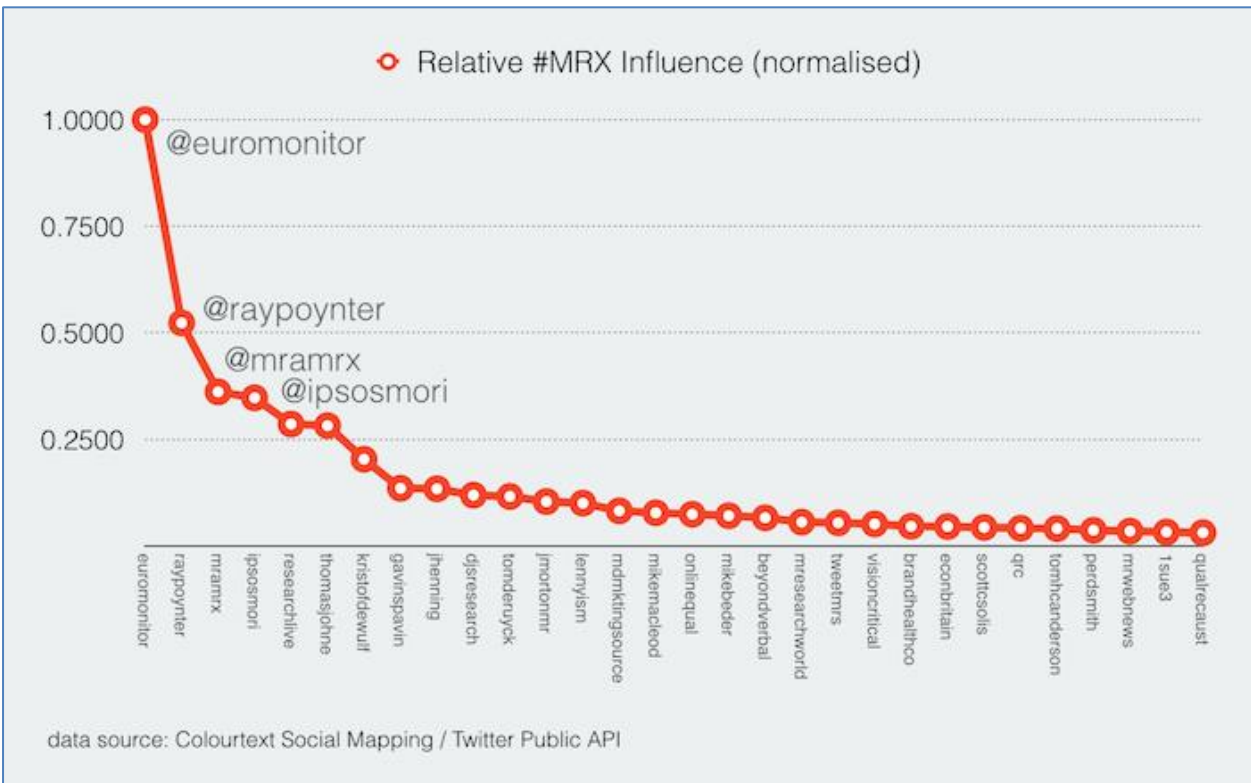
Screen names (UIDs=1379)	Full Name	General Influence (normalised)	2014 #MRX Influence ranking	2012 #MRX Influence ranking
euromonitor	Euromonitor	1.0000	1	-
raypoynter	RayPoynter	0.5231	2	5
mramrx	MRA	0.3614	3	-
ipsosmori	Ipsos MORI	0.3474	4	166
researchlive	Research-live.com	0.2858	5	3
thomasjohne	John Thomas	0.2820	6	-
kristofdewulf	Kristof De Wulf	0.2032	7	79
gavinspavin	Gavin Phillips	0.1351	8	-
jhenning	Jeffrey Henning	0.1339	9	9
djsresearch	DJS Research Ltd	0.1189	10	-
tomderuyck	Tom De Ruyck	0.1159	11	10
jmortonmr	Jeff Morton, PRC	0.1039	12	-
lennyism	Leonard Murphy	0.1002	13	2

The ColourText measure of influence is based on how many people interact with messages. This means that having lots of followers and producing lots of tweets is not essential, but both tend to help. Euromonitor are the top account in the ColourText list in 2014 and Euromonitor post an average of 7.8 #MRX tweets per day, including weekends, and they have nearly 10,000 followers. Some of those Tweets are picked up more than others, for example one providing economic comparisons between China and USA was retweeted 26 times during the study period. Providing what you tweet is useful, the more you tweet the more you will be retweeted.

The image below shows the connections between the key players. The larger the node the greater the influence.



ColourText produce a nice illustration (below) of the power law distribution of influence in Twitter. Euromonitor have twice the influence of the next account (@RayPoynter) and only five accounts (Ray Poynter, MRA, Ipsos MORI, and John Thomas) score more than 25% of the Euromonitor score.



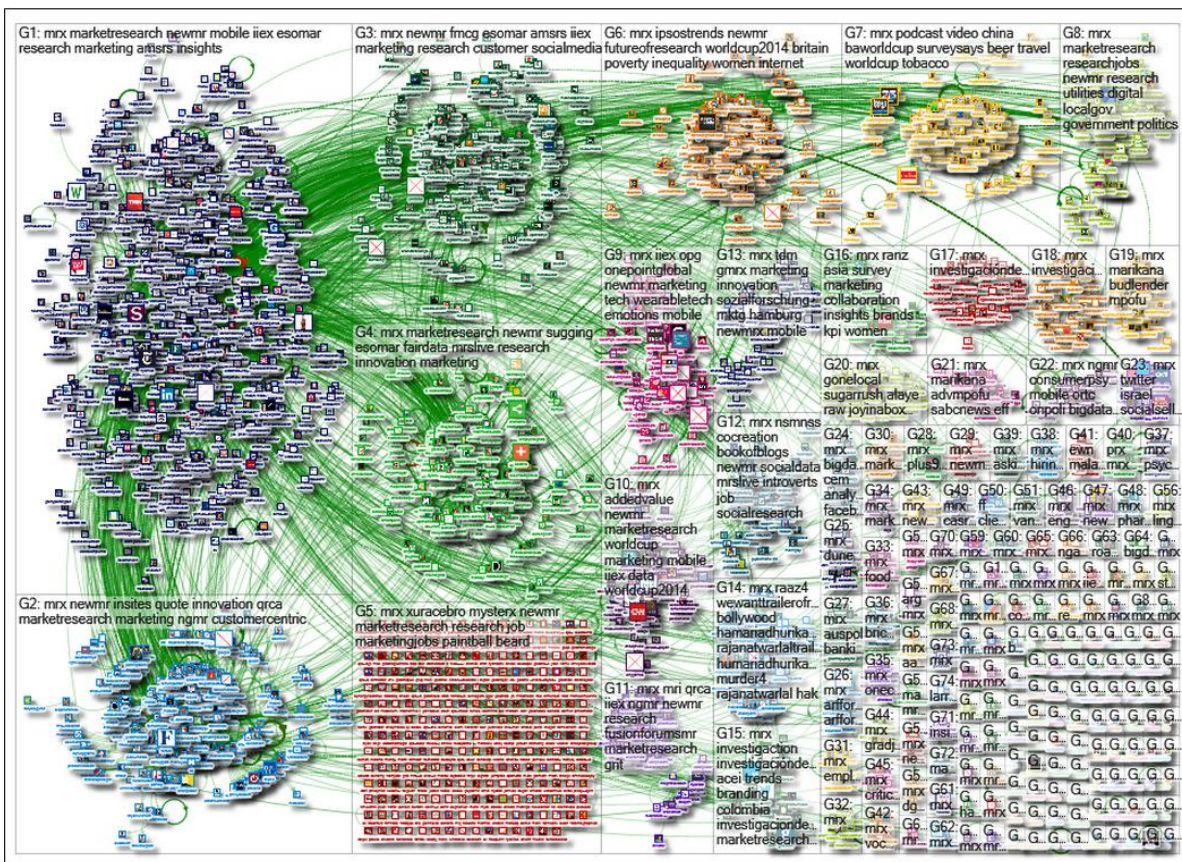
Note that four of the top five positions are held by corporate accounts and all five have 6000+ followers. To be influential seems to require posting at least twice a day.

The ColourText analysis highlights that there are different routes to success. Euromonitor achieve their success by producing a large number of relevant posts and linking to external material. Ray Poynter (i.e. me) achieves second place on the ColourText list by interacting with people, mixing posts, retweets, and replies.

Please go and [read the full report on the ColourText website](#), it has lots more information, and the graphics are interactive (so you can search where you and your friends are).

NodeXL

NodeXL is an open source tool produced by the [Social Media Research Forum](#). Marc Smith who directs the Social Media Research Forum looked at the #MRX tag in July 2014 and you can [see his results in the NodeXL Gallery](#), including a larger and interactive version of the image below.



Like ColourText, NodeXL produces a lot more than thoughts on who might be influential. But, focusing on influence the following were interesting.

In terms of Betweenness Centrality the top 10 names were:

ID	Account	% of Scores
1	thomasjohne	6%
2	raypoynter	5%
3	euromonitor	3%
4	gavinspavin	3%
5	researchlive	3%
6	ipsosmori	3%
7	mramrx	3%
8	jhenning	2%
9	mdmktingsource	2%
10	lennyism	2%

In terms of account mentioned during July the top 10 were:

ID	Account	Mentions
1	researchlive	326
2	raypoynter	322
3	euromonitor	270
4	mramrx	235
5	ipsosmori	214
6	visioncritical	173
7	kristofdewulf	167
8	lennyism	151
9	tomderuyck	110
10	jhenning	98

The data reveals several of the same patterns shown by the other analyses. The scale of connections describe a power law distribution, a small number people with a large number of connections and a very long tail – for example the top name having twice as many mentions and the 2nd or 3rd connection.

The NodeXL ranking produce a slightly lower score for Euromonitor, which may relate to the difference between output, reads, and connections.

Digression on Influence

The term **influence** implies that ideas flow through a network from influential people to the rest of us. This model appeals to common sense and underpins books like Malcolm Gladwell's "The Tipping Point". However, researchers have suggested the notion of influence may be overblown, that what looks like influence is often just people retrofitting a pattern to networks – for more on this check out [Is The Tipping Point Toast?](#) by Duncan Watts. Or, check out this Ted talk by Sinan Aral, [Influence in Social Media Networks](#).

Nevertheless, talking about influence is a lot of fun 😊

Summary

This project illustrates that the simple question "Who are the most influential market researchers on Twitter?" is not a simple question. Even when the question is tightened to the #MRX tag, and a particular period of time, there is plenty of scope for nuanced differences. There are also plenty of reasons to doubt that influence actually exists, or if it does exist it may be much less powerful than we think.

However, I think the following are clear:

- There are relatively few people who are influential, by whatever definition we choose to use. Using different tools the same few core names appear.
- There are very few females who in the top 20, is that because they blow their own trumpet less?
- There are very few 'influencers' from outside North America/Europe, i.e., relatively few from APAC, LatAm, and Africa – but #MRX is an English language tag.
- The role of corporate accounts is strong and appears to be growing.
- There is more than one way of being influential. But, the following are all helpful:
 - Posting frequently, at least twice a day.
 - Linking to useful third-party material (which can be your own if you produce useful material)
 - Interacting with other people (replying and retweeting)
 - Having lots of real followers probably helps, but there is no sure way to get lots of followers.

Thanks and next steps

Many thanks to everybody who helped make the report possible, including the people who shouted out nominations, NoedXL, Texifter, Jeffrey Henning, ColourText, Lenny Murphy and GreenBook. We will be publishing this quite widely, we there will be more information in the forthcoming GRIT report.