

What happens to fans when the story ends?



#FakeWesteros is a community of fans of *Game of Thrones* (*GoT*), the blockbuster HBO TV series that concluded in May 2019 after eight seasons. Using the social media website *Twitter*, fans from around the world “live-tweeted” episodes as a communal role-playing activity, assuming identities of characters from *GoT*. This study investigates the community and its information practices through an analysis of tweets posted during the final season of *GoT*.

WHEN THE WORLD ENDS

Study of #FakeWesteros Twitter Fan Community During the Final Season of *Game of Thrones*

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TWO METHODS:

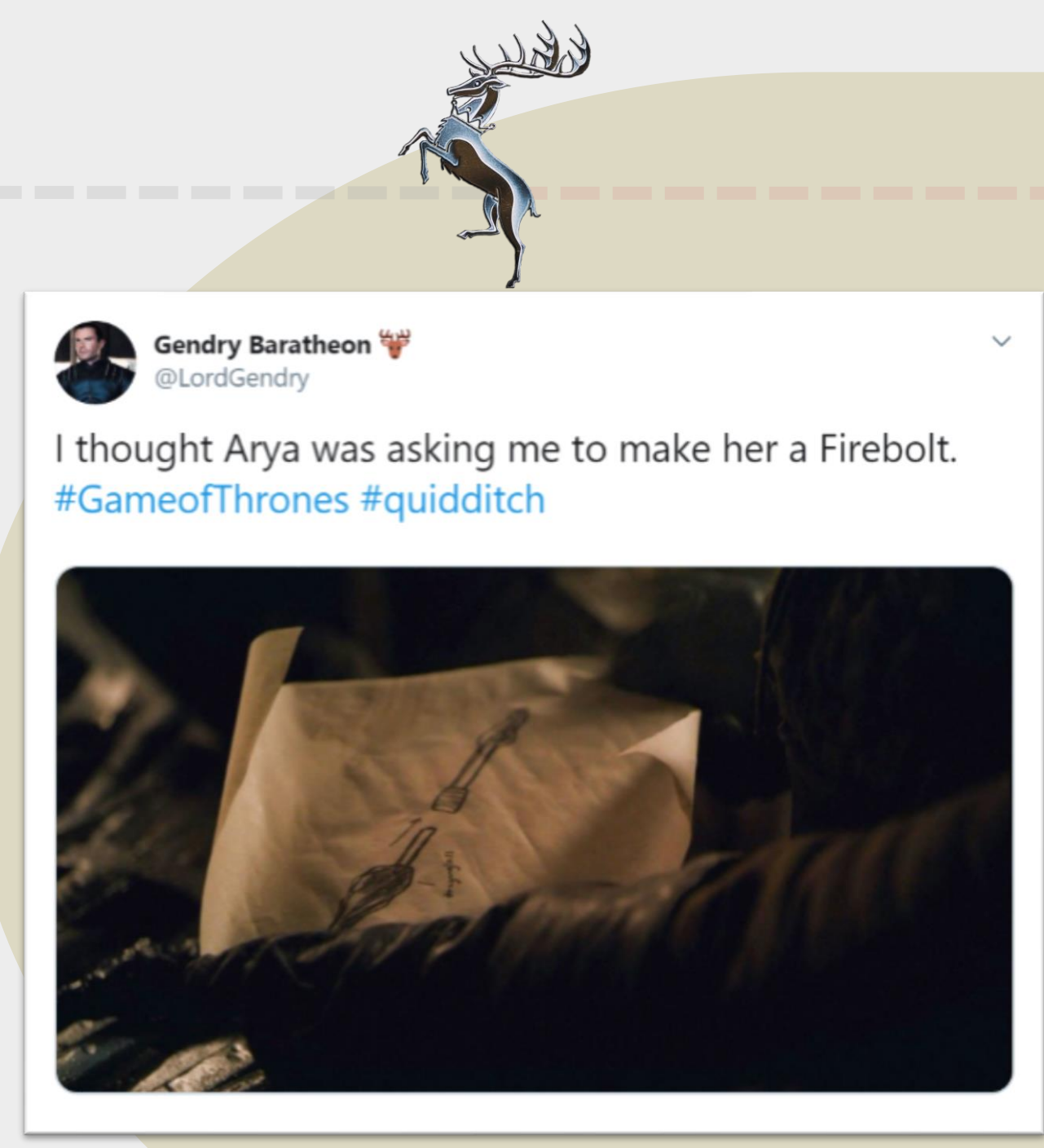
- Qualitative coding of textual and graphic data (Charmaz, 2014).
- Natural Language Processing (NLP) method for sentiment analysis (Hutto & Gilbert, 2014).

ONE DATASET:

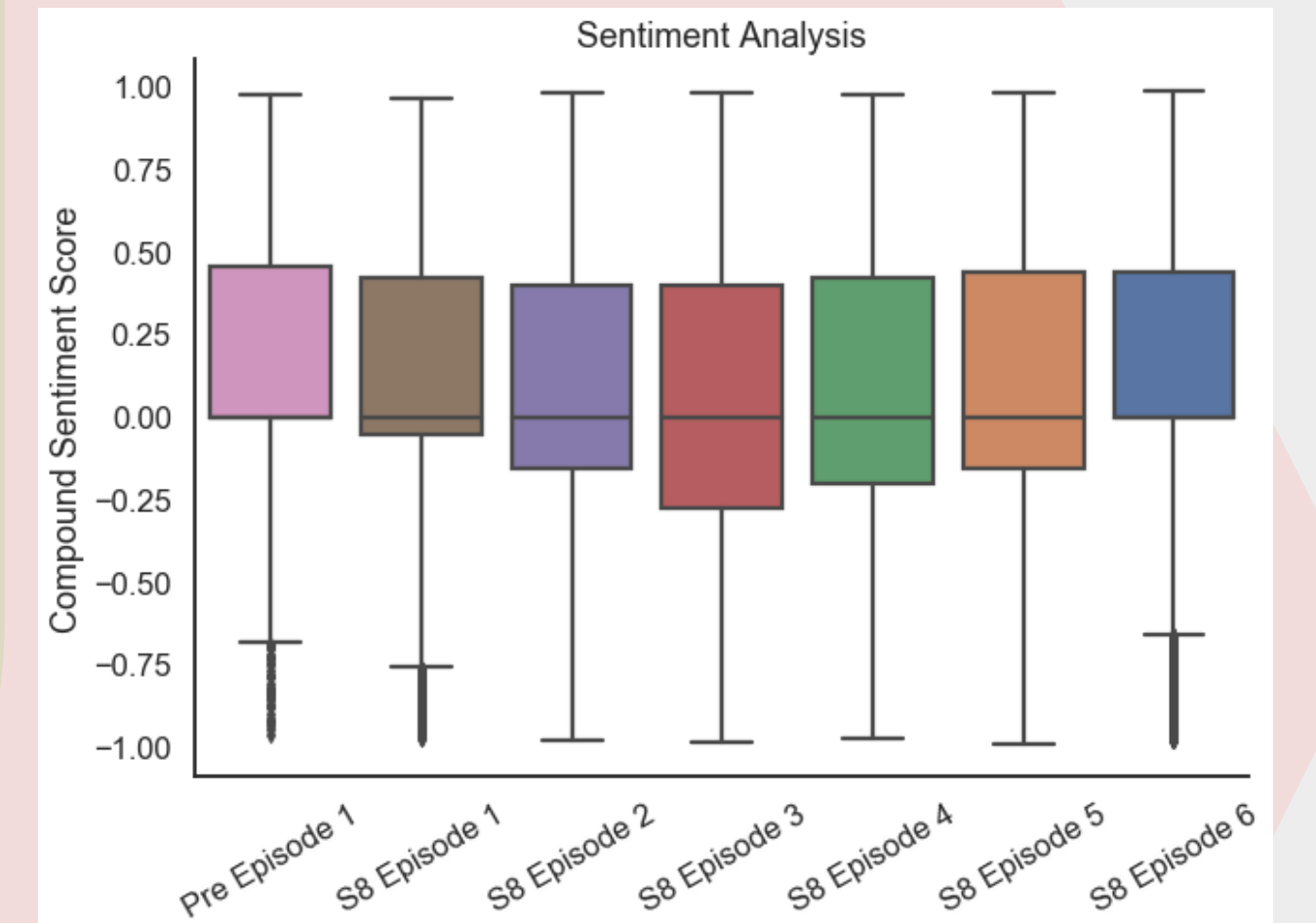
- Timelines of the top 50 members from 12 April to 20 May 2019 collected using the Twitter API.
- Coding sample = 10:100 tweets posted on air dates for Episodes 1 and 8 ($n = 510$ tweets).
- NLP Sentiment analysis = 27,775 tweets (entire dataset).



Word frequency map generated from dataset.



Emojis, memes, animated GIFs and intertextual references: graphic-based sentiment and information negotiation in tweets demonstrate how information sharing is evolving on Twitter.



Despite the overall negative mainstream reaction (Tufekci, 2019), #FakeWesteros fans reacted positively to the final season and episode.

WHAT COMES NEXT...

This study is part of ongoing research into transmedia fans and fandom. For details about this research, further results, future work, acknowledgments and references, visit the **project website** by scanning the QR code.



<http://tiny.cc/fakewesteros>



Sharing their love for the show and for each other, #FakeWesteros members reassured that social bonds formed online would outlast the end of the series.

