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**Marketing Research
410-DB4-AS gr.08328**

RESEARCH PROJECT: TWITTER

Presented to Mrs. Jacqueline De Stefano

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Introduction

The purpose of this Marketing Research is to respond to Twitter's request to help them determine why their company has fallen behind the competition. Our customer plans to use this in order to develop a future action plan. Therefore, we will conduct this marketing research project in order to provide our client with a report of our findings.

During the development of this project basic research will be conducted to expand our overall knowledge about the company, rather than to solve a specific problem. With this acquired knowledge, we will be able to understand the current problematic and come up with possible solutions for the company's issues.

The method used for this research will be exploratory in order to collect preliminary information about the company, followed by descriptive research in order to get more details on the market and on how the consumers act or react to Twitter, as previously seen in Marketing Research classes.

Finally, the type of research used will be Quantitative Research, which will help us to get evidence to back up our assumptions. In addition, we are going to leverage in the knowledge imparted in the marketing research classes where we have the necessary tools to create a marketing research plan.

Identification of the problem and research objectives

The social media, Twitter, has already been one of the main platforms for interaction between Internet users. In Canada for example, Twitter is the third most popular social media, behind just Facebook and YouTube. Its users can process on average 500,000,000 tweets per day. However, in the last quarter of 2015, Twitter lost 2 million users, leaving 305 million active users at the beginning of 2016. (Twitter Usage Statistics, n.d.)

The market's technology changes at a speed never seen in the business world, and what used to be popular in the past can become obsolete in a very short time. The software of social networks discovered through the interaction of its users on the internet is a promising market. The competitiveness of the user interaction market has increased considerably, making the number of applications more than double in a short time. (Twitter Customer Satisfaction)

Twitter felt the competitiveness increase and some of its users migrated to other types of social interaction applications. Other applications came with a more creative approach, making written interactions between users as well as videos, photos, among other types of interactivity.

Nowadays, several social interaction applications such as Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Periscope, Instagram, among others, compete for the most valuable jewel of their customer, the time they spend on the internet.

Our research objectives are **Descriptive**, and at the same time **Diagnostic**, because not only we are describing Twitter's usage decline phenomenon, but we are also aiming to understand why Twitter has been losing its active users, by identifying its causes, and suggesting possible solutions to the problem. See research objectives below:

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- Collect information available from secondary sources that will allow us to have a better understanding of what is the actual situation in Twitter's usage problem.
- Conduct a primary research that will allow us to fill in the existent information gaps between what it was acquired in the secondary data research and the problem Twitter is facing nowadays.
- Identify through our data collection tool the causes of the usage decline in Twitter and the reasons that lead to this decrease.
- Analyze the data collected from the primary research by using statistical tools.
- Recommend to our client possible solutions to the problem based on the information acquired from the analyzed data .

Elements of the research design and why it is the best type of design for our organizational goals

The Research Design is going to be **Descriptive** Design because our research objective aims to find answers to the questions, who, what, where, when and how. However, to have accurate information we will use **Exploratory** Research Design through secondary data in order to solve the problem. For secondary data, we will use published sources and external databases to understand the scenario that involves social media world such as Twitter, and how the problem was created. For Descriptive Design, we will be sending questionnaires by email to be filled out and to get information directly from the source.

The way to get the information from the sample can be better than others because it does not take a lot of time and it can be sent to as many participants as needed. The type of research we are going to use will be Quantitative Research because it allows us to interview a large group of respondents that will answer the pre designed (structured) questionnaire, and it is also cost and time effective.

Secondary Data

To understand better the problematic that Twitter is facing with the users and why the platform has been in decline for the past year, we needed to gather information about the current situation according to the company itself and former plus current studies that help us to reach our objectives.

According with Twitter's website on June 30 on this year, Twitter has 313 million of monthly active users, from those, one million visit monthly through sites with embedded Tweets. Furthermore, 82% are active users on mobile, 79% accounts outside the U.S and more the 40 languages supported (About: Twitter, 2016). According with the website Statistica, the global audience of Twitter "during the second quarter of 2015, it was found that 39 percent of global internet users were Twitter visitors and 22 percent were active users."

According with Eri Sherman in the 2014 published news on CBS News about Twitter, Twopcharts analytics firm found "44 percent of all people signed up have never sent a single tweet". Furthermore, there are "974 million existing Twitter accounts(...)" (Sherman, 2014). However, most of these users are inactive. This is a great indicator on how appealing is the platform for users when almost 45% of the users do not seem to be on board with the design and attractiveness of the social media as a tool of interaction.

Nowadays, several social interaction applications such as Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Periscope, Instagram, among others, compete for the most important thing of their customer, the time they spend on the internet. According to Felix Richter (Richter, Facebook Inc. Dominates the Social Media Landscape, 2016) , by June 2016 Facebook was the first social media application with most active users followed by WhatsApp and Messenger as messaging

service, Twitter managed to occupied the 7th place in the list right before the giant Snapchat. This allows to understand that not everything is lost for the company.

It comes valid to keep in mind that the informational importance of the platform it has kept the value according to the CBC report. As well it comes a great quality of Twitter of how effective it has been with the management of Customer Service for many companies, according to David Gianneto writer of the Huffington Post, (Giannetto, 2016),if they are able this year to include a new B2C update the strengths the link between the companies services with the ability to make profit out of it by an e-commerce link it will help Twitter to overcome the 8 year rule death line for most social media platforms as he specified in his article.

The updates in technology since May 2016, that bets for a more interactive platform that allows user to add and share more information without eliminating the classic limitation of 140 characters is the latest try of the platform to bring the users back on track. This result is still up to revision and it will be the real prove if the future of Twitter is promising or not and is able to keep giving what the information driven consumers need.

Data Collection Tools

The collection tool we will use is going to be a computer administered survey by email. Furthermore, this method will allow us to reach many respondents with low costs and provides us with more accessibility. This method was also chosen because in Canada most of people have access to internet and it is easy to connect anywhere.

In the (See appendix – Figure 1) there is a copy of the questionnaire shared with the participants. This questionnaire will be formed by 18 diverse questions like categorical, dichotomous, Likert scale, ratio scale, contingency and ordinal questions.

Determine sample plan and size

All social media users will be part of the population. To identify the problems with Twitter, our group will use the “Convenience Sampling method”. This non-probability sampling method was chosen because of the cost and time benefit. According with Statista’s website, the estimated projections of number of social media users worldwide in 2016 is 2.34 billion. (Number of social media users worldwide from 2010 to 2020 (in billions), n.d.). (See Appendix – Figure 2) The size of our sample will be 30 respondents. To be prepared for limitations and future problems we will try to oversample.

Data Analysis and Conclusion

From the given questionnaire, we achieved a result of 62 surveys. However, from those 62 surveys, 18 of them were considered invalid due to wrong answers, and 14 of them were from people who have never had a twitter account, totalizing 32 surveys that were considered irrelevant for our analysis. The remaining balance of was of 30 surveys.

Analyzing the questions number one and two, the results reveal that from 30 people interviewed, 60% of them do not have an active Twitter account. Also, from these 60% we observe that all of them were Twitter customers before but for some reason cancelled their account. (See Appendix – Figure 3)

Additionally, the questions three, five and six show the details of the canceled accounts. The results reveal that from 18 cancelled accounts, 41% of them cancelled their account in the years of 2012 to 2013, and 41% of them cancelled their account in the years of 2014 to 2015. Moreover, the results show a mean of 1.55 and standard deviation of 0.85, representing the quantity of users who cancelled their account in the first year of subscription, in other words, 67% of them cancelled their account in the first year of subscription, being the main reason the switching to another social media, which represents 56% of them. (See Appendix – Figure 4)

On the other hand, the analysis of the questions seven, eight, nine, and ten, describes the profile of those who still using their Twitter account. The results show that from 12 active users, 80% of them uses the account only for personal purposes, comparing to 17% that uses the account equally for personal and professional purposes. Another important factor to consider is the low popularity of users, for example, the analysis of question eight shows a mean of 2.91 and standard deviation of 1.67, representing the number of user's followers under 49, in other words,

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33% of the active users has under 49 followers, however, the question nine reveals a mean of 3.16 and standard deviation of 1.58 representing the number of people the Twitter users are following, to explain, there is a tie of 25% users following under 49, 150 to 200, and over 200 profiles. Another point is that 30% of our sample created their account in the years of 2012 and 2013, that is the same period of most cancellations. (See Appendix – Figure 5)

In addition, from the question twelve to the question sixteen, we observe the level of dissatisfaction of the current users. The results show that the group of 30 people, we have a mean of 3.2 and standard deviation of 1.27, representing the quantity of people who thinks Twitter is a waste of time, which represents 37% of our sample. In contrast, only 23% of them believe that Twitter is not a waste of time, and 40% of them have a neutral opinion about it. Also, the question fifteen shows a mean of 2.65 and standard deviation of 1.23 representing the customers level of satisfaction, in other words, 41% of them are dissatisfied with the level of interactivity provided by Twitter. As a result of their dissatisfaction, the question fourteen shows a mean of 4 and standard deviation of 3.05 representing how many times users post something on Twitter, which means that 100% of the active users post something on Twitter under two times per day, and more than that, the question sixteen shows a mean 4.66 and standard deviation of 2.77 representing how many times users check their Twitter feeds, which means that 64% of them log on Twitter to check information under two times per day. (See Appendix – Figure 6)

Finally, from the questions seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen, we observe the profile of our sample, being the biggest part, 67% of them, composed by women, 50% of them in the group age of 19 to 25 years old, and 80% of them residents of North America. (See Appendix – Figure 7)

Please, note that question four did not show any data because it was specific for people who never had a twitter account, being considered not relevant for our analysis.

Limitations

We encounter limitations on how our respondents answer the questionnaire as maybe some questions were not disposed clear enough and that led into some confusion while we analyzed the data. The website used to create the questionnaire did not allows us to personalize the contingency questions in a certain way, so when respondents selected an option it would only display the applicable questions.

We are students in Marketing Research for the first time and it was difficult to apply the knowledge in the process of analyzing the data collected.

Conclusion

To conclude, according to our findings we noticed that after the year of 2012, most of the Twitter users end up giving up on their accounts before they complete one year of subscription. Besides that, the main reason for the loss of subscribers is the switching to another social media that offers more interactivity among users, as for example Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. Technology is constantly changing, and while technology changes the user's preferences changes, new social medias are created and improved. In contrast, Twitter is not following the market trends and it's still stagnated, giving the opportunity for competitors to take its place. (See Appendix – Figure 8). With the purpose of helping Twitter to gain its competitive advantage back, we strongly suggest some changes in the features that involve the interactivity between users, for example, the diversity of the types of posts should be improved, adding the possibility

of posting photos and videos without affecting the number of characters, strengthen the brand among young people, and most important, do not lose the main characteristics of the brand.

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Appendix

Figure 1

Twitter

This survey was developed to analyze the usage of Twitter. Furthermore, to understand the root problems that are making the usage decrease. Please answer this survey choosing the options that fit better with your reality.

1* Do you have a Twitter account?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2 If your answer is "No" for question 1, please tell us: Have you ever had a twitter account?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3 If your answer is "Yes" for question 2, please tell us: Why did you cancel your Twitter account?

☐ Stopped using all social medias
☐ Changed to other social medias
☐ Not popular
☐ Difficult to use
☐ Not reliable
☐ Not interactive

4 If your answer is "No" for question 2, please tell us: Why haven't you ever subscribed to a Twitter account?

☐ Not interested
☐ Not popular
☐ Not interactive
☐ Not reliable
☐ Not easy to use
☐ Not user friendly

5 If your answer is "Yes" for question 2, please tell us: When did you cancel the "Twitter" account?

- ☐ 2006 - 2007
- ☐ 2008 - 2009
- ☐ 2010 - 2011
- ☐ 2012 - 2013
- ☐ 2014 - 2015
- ☐ 2016

6 If your answer is "Yes" for question 2, please tell us: For how long did your account stay active?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 - 2 years
- ☐ 3 - 4 years
- ☐ 5 -6 years
- ☐ More than 6 years

7 If your answer is "Yes" for question 1, please tell us: What is the purpose of your Twitter account:

- ☐ Personal purposes
- ☐ Professional purposes
- ☐ Equally for professional and personal purposes

8 If your answer is "Yes" for question 1, please tell us: How many followers do you have?

- ☐ Under 49
- ☐ 50 - 99
- ☐ 100 - 149
- ☐ 150 - 200
- ☐ Over 200

9 If your answer is "Yes" for question 1, please tell us: How may profiles are you following?

- ☐ Under 49
- ☐ 50 - 99
- ☐ 100 - 149
- ☐ 150 - 200
- ☐ Over 200

10* When did you create the "Twitter" account?

- ☐ 2006 - 2007
- ☐ 2008 - 2009
- ☐ 2010 - 2011
- ☐ 2012 - 2013
- ☐ 2014 - 2015
- ☐ 2016
- ☐ I never had an account

11* Excluding Twitter, which social media do you use daily?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook | <input type="checkbox"/> Snapchat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram | <input type="checkbox"/> Periscope |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pinterest | <input type="checkbox"/> LinkedIn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tumblr | <input type="checkbox"/> WhatsApp |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Google+ | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask.fm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> You Tube | <input type="checkbox"/> Viber |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digg | |

12* Please, rate the following social medias according to your preference. (1 represents the favorite, and 14 the less favorite)

⬆️⬆️ 1 Twitter

⬆️⬆️ 2 Facebook

⬆️⬆️ 3 Snapchat

⬆️⬆️ 4 Instagram

⬆️⬆️ 5 Periscope

⬆️⬆️ 6 Pinterest

⬆️⬆️ 7 Linkedin

⬆️⬆️ 8 Tumblr

⬆️⬆️ 9 WhatsApp

⬆️⬆️ 10 Google+

⬆️⬆️ 11 Ask.fm

⬆️⬆️ 12 You Tube

⬆️⬆️ 13 Viber

⬆️⬆️ 14 Digg

☐ finished sorting?

13* Do you consider "Twitter" a waste of time?

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

☐☐☐☐☐

14* How many times a day do you post on Twitter?

- ☐ Under 2
- ☐ 3 - 4
- ☐ 5 - 6
- ☐ 7 - 8
- ☐ 9 - 10
- ☐ More then 11
- ☐ I don't have an account

15 What is your level of satisfaction with Twitter's interactivity?

Poor	Fair	Neutral	Good	Excellent
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16* How many times a day do you check the information on Twitter feeds?

- ☐ Under 2
- ☐ 3 - 4
- ☐ 5 - 6
- ☐ 7 - 8
- ☐ 9 - 10
- ☐ More then 11
- ☐ I don't have an account

17* What is you gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

18* What is your age?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 19-25
- ☐ 26-30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41 or older

19* Where do you live?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> North America | <input type="radio"/> Asia |
| <input type="radio"/> South America | <input type="radio"/> Oceania |
| <input type="radio"/> Central America | <input type="radio"/> Africa |
| <input type="radio"/> Europe | <input type="radio"/> Antarctica |

Finish
Survey

Figure 2

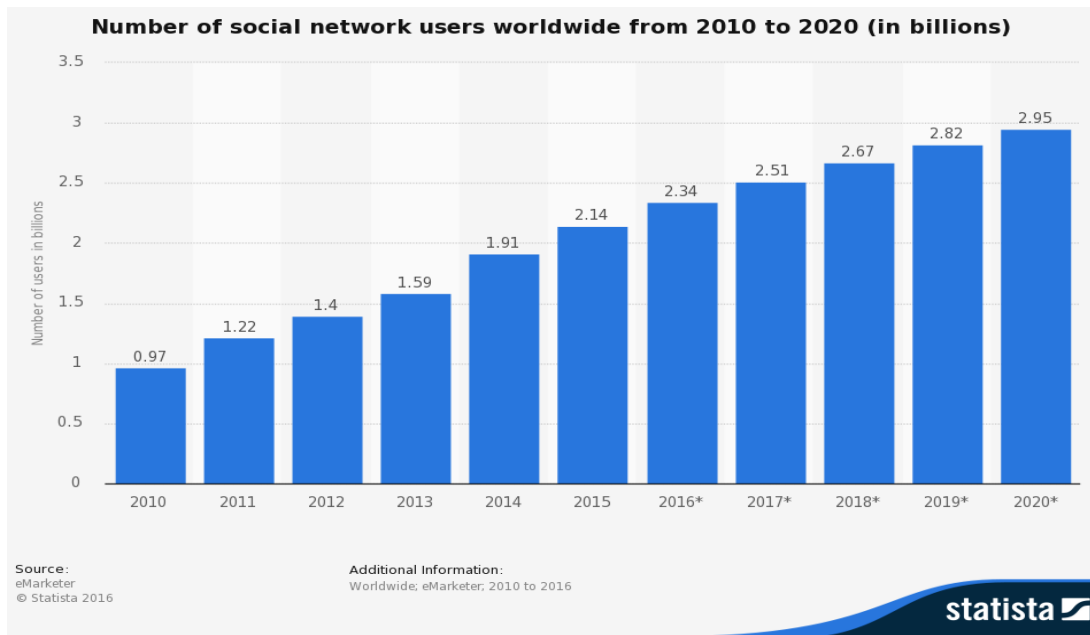


Figure 3

Do you have a Twitter account?			Have you ever had a twitter account?		
Yes	40%	12	Yes	100%	18
No	60%	18	No	0%	0
Total	100%	30	Total	100%	18

Figure 4

When did you cancel your Twitter account?			For how long did your account stay active?		
2006-2007	6%	1	Less then 1 year	67%	12
2008-2009	12%	2	1-2 years	11%	2
2010-2011	0%	0	3-4 years	22%	4
2012-2013	41%	7	5-6 years	0%	0
2014-2015	41%	7	More than 6 years	0%	0
2016	0%	0	Total	100%	18
Total	100%	17			

Why did you cancel your Twitter account?		
Stopped using all social medias	11%	2
Changed to other social medias	56%	10
Not popular	0%	0
Difficult to use	17%	3
Not reliable	0%	0
Not interactive	17%	3
Total	100%	18

Figure 5

What is the purpose of your Twitter account?		
Personal purposes	83%	10
professional purposes	0%	0
equally for professional and personal purposes	17%	2
Total	100%	12

How many followers do you have?		
Under 49	33%	4
50 - 99	8%	1
100 - 149	17%	2
150 - 200	17%	2
Over 200	25%	3
Total	100%	12

How may profiles are you following?		
Under 49	25%	3
50 - 99	8%	1
100 - 149	17%	2
150 - 200	25%	3
Over 200	25%	3
Total	100%	12

When did you create the "Twitter" account?		
2006 - 2007	10%	3
2008 - 2009	20%	6
2010 - 2011	23%	7
2012 - 2013	30%	9
2014 - 2015	17%	5
2016	0%	0
I never had an account	0%	0
Total	100%	30

Figure 6

Ranking of favorite social media						
Social media	Option 1		Option 2		Option 3	
Facebook	57%	17	23%	7	20%	6
Snapchat	7%	2	53%	16	40%	12
Instagram	37%	11	23%	7	40%	12
Total	100%	30	100%	30	100%	30

Do you consider "Twitter" a waste of time?		
Strongly Disagree	13%	4
Disagree	10%	3
Neutral	40%	12
Agree	17%	5
Strongly Agree	20%	6
Total	100%	30

How many times a day do you post on Twitter?		
Under 2	100%	15
3 - 4	0%	0
5 - 6	0%	0
7 - 8	0%	0
9 - 10	0%	0
More than 11	0%	0
Total	100%	15

What is your level of satisfaction with Twitter?		
Poor	24%	7
Fair	17%	5
Neutral	34%	10
Good	17%	5
Excellent	7%	2
Total	100%	29

How many times a day do you check the information on Twitter?		
Under 2	64%	9
3 - 4	7%	1
5 - 6	14%	2
7 - 8	0%	0
9 - 10	7%	1
More than 11	7%	1
Total	100%	14

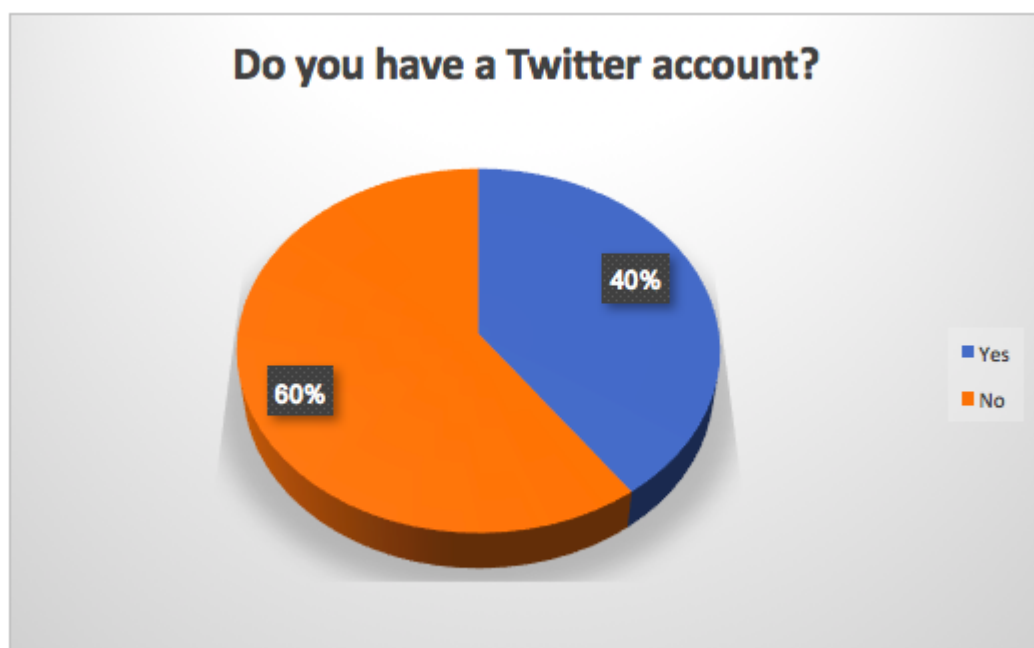
Figure 7

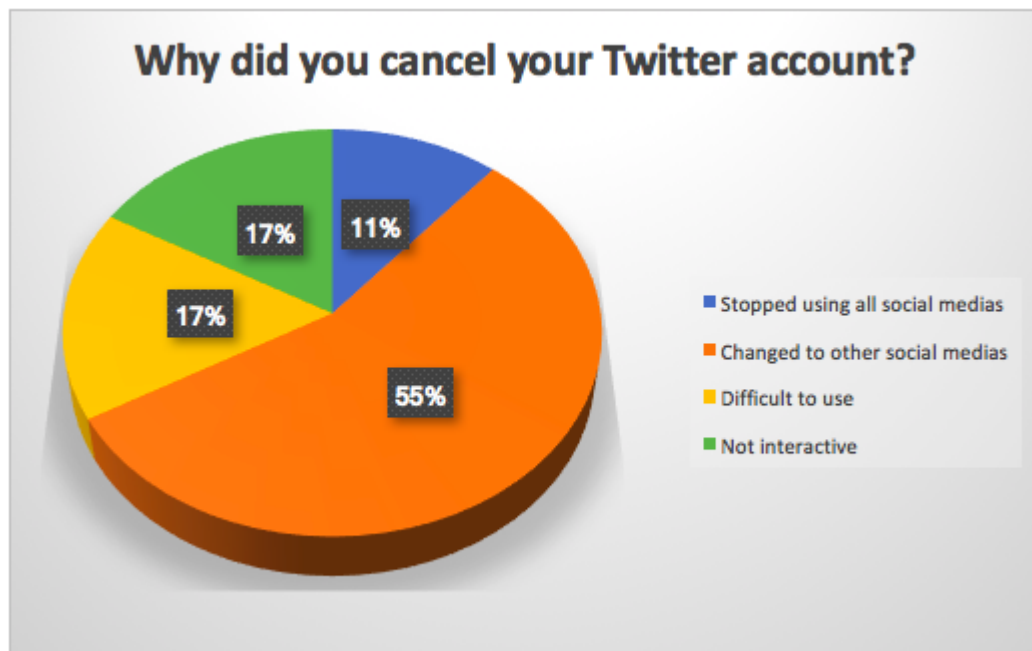
What is your gender?		
Male	33%	10
Female	67%	20
Total	100%	30

What is your age?		
Under 18	3%	1
19 - 25	50%	15
26 - 30	23%	7
31- 40	17%	5
41 or older	7%	2
Total	100%	30

Where do you live?		
North America	80%	24
South America	17%	5
Central America	0%	0
Europe	3%	1
Asia	0%	0
Oceania	0%	0
Africa	0%	0
Antartica	0%	0
Total	100%	30

Figure 8





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