

We look at Google results and see society, instead of Google. That is a shorthand way of saying that we see institutions and issues in the ranked lists that are returned in the search results. Query the word rights in google.com and you are returned with the top Websites in the English-language space doing rights, in a variety of ways. You can also see which rights types are higher than others. For example, LGBT rights appear in the top ten of google.com, but not in google.fr, where youth rights are much higher.

But the question that is often asked is, where does social research end, and Google studies begin? Isn't it Google that determines the rankings? Surely Google has more to do with the hierarchies than societal dynamics. Can Google ever be removed from the picture when one is using it to perform research? These questions are classic ones in social research, as they concern the possibility of being able to isolate phenomena dependent on a context for them to exist. However, this question also should be put to Web studies more generally. Can one only study the Web with the Web?

The two research projects presented are attempts at a Web studies, where the devices themselves are a part of the analysis, and one is always aware of the significance of the question of where Google studies ends, and social research with Google begins. It is a question and approach that also may be applied to other devices as Twitter.

What kinds of findings may be made by reinterpreting search engine results, especially the rankings of sites for particular queries? What kinds of findings can be made by comparing results across the many local versions of Google, such as the new Palestinian one, google.ps? In the project "The Nationalities of Issues: Rights Types," we entered the word rights in various languages into the local Googles, in order to obtain hierarchies of rights types per country. Are there distinctive rights that rise to the top in Finland, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Russia, Japan, Canada, the U.K., Australia, Philippines, Ivory Coast and other countries? Cultural rights in Mexico, pollution victims' rights in Switzerland, right to education in native

sign language in Finland, rights of the over-indebted in Ivory Coast – countries could be said to have distinctive concerns, compared to other countries, as read from local Google results.

Twitter, generally, but also during the Iran election crisis (June 2009 and beyond), has been described as banal. The question is, could the hundreds of thousands of tweets about the Iran election crisis be made into a comprehensible account of what has been happening on the ground as well as online? The project, "For the ppl of Iran - #iranelection RT," is such an attempt. In order to filter the most significant tweets, and order them so as to recount the crisis, the digital methods researchers chose to assemble the top three retweets per day, and order them chronologically, from 10 June to 30 June. The resulting output is a capsule account of the crisis, which the researchers also subsequently edited, and made into sub-storylines, on arrests, violence, Neda, censorship as well as the Internet. The entire set of top 3 retweets with the #iranelection hash tag from 10-30 June 2009 is printed. The sub-threads are online at <http://www.rettiwt.net/> (requires [issuecrawler.net](http://www.issuecrawler.net) login).

The Digital Methods Initiative (DMI), Amsterdam, is a collaboration of the New Media program, Media Studies, University of Amsterdam and the Govcom.org Foundation. DMI is dedicated to reworking method for Internet research, and in particular to learning and developing technique for studying societal conditions and cultural change with the Web. Its director is Richard Rogers, Chair, New Media & Digital Culture, University of Amsterdam. Its coordinators and project facilitators are the New Media PhD candidates, Anne Helmond, Sabine Niederer, Michael Stevenson and Esther Weltevrede. Anat Ben-David, the PhD candidate with dual affiliation, also facilitates. Staff include Erik Borra, Marieke van Dijk, Andrea Fiore, Koen Martens and Marijn de Vries Hoogerwerff. DMI is online at <http://www.digitalmethods.net/>.

Text by Richard Rogers, Michael Stevenson and Esther Weltevrede.

## The Nationalities of Issues

Most significant rights types per country according to local Google results of the query for rights in the local languages.

### RESEARCH STRATEGY

Employ Google to show most prominent types of rights per country.

### METHOD

Query the term “rights” in the local languages in the local Google versions, e.g., “oigused” in Google.ee and “direitos” in Google.pt. Manually, read the results and make lists of the top ten, distinctive rights types, leaving them in the order that Google provided.

Google.se with query “rattigheter” (13.07.09)  
Google.fi with query “oikeudet” (13.07.09)  
Google.ee with query “oigused” (15.07.09)  
Google.lv with query “tiesibas” (16.07.09)  
Google.co.uk with query “rights” (13.07.09)  
Google.nl with query “rechten” (13.07.09)  
Google.be with query “rechten van” (15.07.09)  
Google.be with query “droits” (14.07.09)  
Google.lu with query “rechte” (15.07.09)  
Google.de with query “rechte” (15.07.09)  
Google.at with query “rechte” (15.07.09)  
Google.ch with query “rechte” (15.07.09)  
Google.fr with query “droits” (14.07.09)  
Google.pt with query “direitos” (14.07.09)  
Google.es with query “derechos” (13.07.09)  
Google.it with query “diritto al” OR “diritto all” OR “diritto alla” (13.07.09)  
Google.ro with query “drepturile” (13.07.09)  
Google.mo with query “drepturile” (13.07.09)  
Google.ru with query “права” (13.07.09)  
Google.com.tr with query “haklari” (17.07.09)  
Google.jp with query “權利” (16.07.09)  
Google.hk with query “權利” (17.07.09)  
Google.com.ph with query “karapatang” (16.07.09)  
Google.ci with query “droits” (17.07.09)  
Google.com.au with query “rights” (14.07.09)  
Google.ca with query “rights” (15.07.09)  
Google.ca with query “droits” (15.07.09)  
Google.com with query “rights” (14.07.09)  
Google.com with query “derechos” (15.07.09)  
Google.com.mx with query “derechos” (15.07.09)  
Google.com.br with query “direitos” (15.07.09)  
Google.ar with query “derechos” (15.07.09)  
Google.pe with query “derechos” (15.07.09)

### DATA STORAGE

The top 100 results per query are stored for validation purposes. In Firefox, save page as, web page, complete. Data sets available at <http://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/NationalityofIssues/>.

Note the local Google versions were chosen on the basis of the language skills of the participants of the Digital Methods Summer School, 2009. Note too that when faced with a large quantity of Google versions for a single language, a further selection was made, e.g., the top three Spanish-speaking countries according to population.

For those local Google versions where multiple languages are spoken, the two dominant languages were queried. We queried google.be (Belgium) in Flemish and French, and queried google.ca (Canada) in English and French.

### FINDINGS

Countries could be said to have distinctive concerns, compared to other countries, as read from Google results. For example, everyman’s rights in Finland, prostitutes’ rights in the Netherlands, computer programmers’ rights in Japan and the right to oblivion in Italy (not saving everything) are unique to the respective countries. The specific rights language per country has been retained, meaning that LGBT rights in the United States, and homosexual rights in Hong Kong, are not regarded as equivalents. Also, given the limited sample of countries and the method for selection, the most widely shared rights across countries are not the subject of analysis.

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DESIGN: Vera Bekema and Anne Helmond.

















































































A product of the Digital Methods Initiative, Summer School ‘09, <http://www.digitalmethods.net/>.



Right type



Right type unique to the country  
(in this sample)

| SWEDEN  | FINLAND   | ESTONIA   | LATVIA   | UNITED KINGDOM   | NETHERLANDS   | BELGIUM (Flemish)  | BELGIUM (French)   |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| <br>human rights                     | <br>children's rights                            | <br>citizen's rights           | <br>animal rights                   | <br>human rights            | <br>works council rights       | <br>human rights             | <br>human rights                            |
| <br>patients' rights                 | <br>everyman's right (freedom to roam)           | <br>children's rights          | <br>human rights                    | <br>author's rights         | <br>air passengers' rights     | <br>disability rights        | <br>internet rights                         |
| <br>children's rights                | <br>animal rights                                | <br>environmental rights       | <br>air passengers' rights          | <br>digital rights          | <br>children's rights          | <br>cyclists' rights         | <br>youth rights                            |
| <br>air passengers' rights           | <br>consumer rights                              | <br>air passengers' rights     | <br>pension rights for non-citizens | <br>minorities' rights      | <br>human rights               | <br>volunteers' rights       | <br>citizen's rights                        |
| <br>creator's rights                 | <br>women's rights                               | <br>author's rights            | <br>immigrants' rights              | <br>citizen's rights        | <br>minorities' rights         | <br>air passengers' rights   | <br>intellectual property rights            |
| <br>equal rights                    | <br>air passengers' rights                      | <br>patients' rights          | <br>copyright                      | <br>employment rights      | <br>prostitutes' rights       | <br>works council rights    | <br>patients' rights                       |
| <br>citizen's rights               | <br>renter's rights                            | <br>property rights          | <br>children's rights             | <br>publicity rights      | <br>taxpayers' rights        | <br>children's rights      | <br>women's rights                        |
| <br>women's rights                 | <br>patients' rights                           | <br>landowners' rights       | <br>social rights                 | <br>abortion rights       | <br>youth rights             | <br>job applicant's rights | <br>children's rights                     |
| <br>right of collective bargaining | <br>youth rights                               | <br>workers' rights          | <br>teachers' rights              | <br>photographers' rights | <br>islam and women's rights | <br>immigrants' rights     | <br>workers' rights                       |
| <br>food rights                    | <br>right to education in native sign language | <br>sexual and health rights | <br>consumer rights               | <br>children's rights     | <br>author's rights          | <br>patients' rights       | <br>the right to defend yourself in court |

LUXEMBOURG

GERMANY

AUSTRIA

SWITZERLAND

FRANCE

PORTUGAL

SPAIN

ITALY



children's rights



children's rights



apprentice & trainee rights



citizen's rights



youth rights



human rights



human rights



privacy rights



personal information rights



youth rights



youth rights



journalists' rights



human rights



children's rights



author's rights



labour rights



human rights



rights of disabled children



children's rights



children's rights



women's rights



animal rights



digital rights



right to nationality



author's rights



rights of future generations



creators' rights



pollution victims' rights



children's rights



women's rights



women's rights



right to oblivion



european citizens' rights



phishing victims' rights



civil service rights



athletes' rights in doping cases



internet and ICTs rights



artists' rights



reproductive rights



right to information



youth rights



homosexuals' rights



disability rights



maternity rights



freedom of speech



citizens' rights



children's rights



health care rights



political rights



civil rights of institutionalised persons



work inspectors' rights



student's parents' rights



patients' rights



disability rights



intellectual property rights



right to a fair trial



shareholders' rights



apprentice & trainee rights



shareholders' rights



right to a fair trial



air passengers' rights



pedestrians' rights



audiovisual producers' rights



environmental rights



digital rights



human rights



athletes' rights in doping cases



equal rights



animal rights



patients' rights



rights of indigenous people



right to exercise religion



rights of future generations



crime victims' rights



patients' rights



apprentice & trainee rights



citizens' rights



passengers' rights



environmental human rights



medical self-determination

ROMANIA

MOLDAVIA

RUSSIA

TURKEY

JAPAN

HONG KONG

PHILLIPPINES

IVORY COAST



human rights



human rights



human rights



human rights



children's rights



taxpayers' rights



copyright



human rights



children's rights



children's rights



children's rights



women's rights



right to defend yourself in court



children's rights



human rights



youth rights



citizens' rights



author's rights



intellectual property rights



children's rights



patients' rights



labour rights



civil and political rights



consumer rights



author's rights



patients' rights



animal rights



consumer rights



computer programmers' rights



human rights



student's rights



workers' rights



intellectual property rights



women's rights



freedom of the press rights



patients' rights



environmental rights



copyright



children's rights



rights of the overindebted



women's rights



disability rights



consumer rights



author's rights



performers' rights



right to demonstrate



rights of street vendors



health care rights



pedestrians' rights



pregnancy and maternity rights



citizen's rights



animal rights



disability rights



homosexual rights



the right to vote for a president



women's rights



homosexuals' rights



intellectual property rights



workers' rights



citizen's rights



freedom of speech



animal rights



the right to vacation



children's rights



pregnancy and maternity rights



personal information rights



housing rights



taxpayers' rights



the right to information



consumer rights



rights of indigenous people



author's rights



mental disability rights



pedestrians' rights



author's rights



intellectual property rights



music copyright



migrant workers' rights



intellectual property rights



fundamental rights

AUSTRALIA



human rights

CANADA  
(French)



human rights

CANADA  
(English)



human rights

USA  
(English)



human rights

MEXICO



human rights

BRAZIL



human rights

ARGENTINA



human rights

PERU



human rights



artists' rights



children's rights



women's rights



artists' rights



children's rights



children's rights



school pupils' rights



children's rights



men's rights



immigrants' rights



housing rights



privacy rights



workers' rights



author's rights



author's rights



women's rights



welfare rights



author's rights



online rights



LGBT rights



women's rights



disability rights



civil rights



rights of indigenous  
people



activists' rights



civil and political  
rights



children's rights



publicity rights



labour rights



animal rights



rights of indigenous  
people



author's rights



plant breeders'  
rights



human rights at  
work



publicity rights



medicare rights



animal rights



fair use of  
copyrighted material



women's rights



reproductive rights



workers' rights



women's rights



media usage rights



children's rights



reproductive rights



infants' and adoles-  
cents' rights



animal rights



school pupils' rights



digital rights



non-smokers' rights



workers' rights



digital rights



intellectual  
property rights



minorities' rights



environmental  
human rights



animal rights



gay and lesbian  
rights



fundamental rights



non-smokers' rights



disability rights



rights of indigenous  
peoples



consumer rights



children's rights



environmental rights



aboriginal rights



intellectual  
property rights



equality rights in  
housing



civil rights



cultural rights



sexual rights and  
reproductive rights



citizen's rights



workers' rights



## For the ppl of Iran - #iranelection RT

#iranelection RT tells the story of the day-to-day unfolding of the Iran election crisis as seen through Twitter. #iranelection RT is a collection of all the tweets that have been tagged #iranelection from the first one on 10 June up to 30 June 2009, some 650,000 in all. The most "retweeted" tweets (RTs) have been filtered and organised chronologically, as opposed to the reverse chronology that Twitter uses. In "reversed realtime" the most significant #iranelection retweets show the urgency and the emotion of those twenty days in June, when the tensions on the streets and the coverage in the media were at their height. The crisis unfolds on Twitter with the discovery of the value of the #iranelection hash tag, and tweeters both in and outside Iran begin using it to mark all tweets about the events there. Mousavi holds an emergency press conference. The voter turn-out is 80%. SMS is down, Mousavi's website and Facebook are blocked. Police are using pepper spray. Mousavi is under house arrest, and declares he is prepared for martyrdom. Neda is dead. There is a riot in Batherstan Square. First aid info here. Bon Jovi sings "Stand by Me" in support. Ahmadinejad confirmed the winner. Light a candle for the ppl of Iran.

The collection of tweets also shows how tweeters respond to what is happening online and on the ground. Tweets reporting important websites blocked are followed up by proxies being offered. Accounts of police using pepper spray are followed up by links to websites with first aid information.

For the ppl of Iran - #iranelection RT is an exercise in transforming the supposed banality of Twitter into a machine that recounts events on the ground and in social media.

About the #iranelection collection of tweets (10-30 June 2009)

Tweets tagged with #iranelection - 653,883  
Unique number of Twitter users using #iranelection tag - 99,811  
Number of Twitter users using #iranelection with multiple tweets - 46,702  
Number of Twitter users using #iranelection with greater than 20 tweets - 6,000

Number of Twitter users using #iranelection with 1 tweet - 53,109

Number of Twitter users using #iranelection who were retweeted - 36,913

Number of Twitter users using #iranelection who were retweeted multiple times - 16,336

Number of Twitter users using #iranelection who were retweeted 10 times or more - 2,829

Number of Twitter users using #iranelection who were retweeted 1 time - 20,577



Number of languages used in #iranelection - 26





Number of tweets in #iranelection in English - 612,373




Number of tweets in #iranelection in Farsi - 6,248

"For the ppl of Iran - #iranelection RT" is a production of the Digital Methods Initiative, Summer School, 2009, session on media attention formats, led by Richard Rogers. Programming by Erik Borra, design by Marieke van Dijk and editorial by Kimberley Spreeuwenberg and Esther Weltevrede. #iranelection RT is online at <http://www.rettiwt.net/> (requires [issuecrawler.net](http://www.issuecrawler.net) login).





## #iranelection RT Top 3 retweets per day


**Jun 10** Wow - Twitter search can let you see all the Iran election tweets coming out of Tehran <http://bit.ly/x5C8P> #IranElection  3 retweets Prosecutor General declares unequal airtime given to candidates is against the law <http://bit.ly/1bhCHK> #IranElection  2 retweets Mousavi boycotts TV debate due to unfair time allocation: 20 min to Ahmadinejad, 1:41 to Mosuavi #IranElection

 2 retweets **Jun 11** RT@LaraABCNewsAhmedinejad = Bush, Mousavi = #Obama? Sadjadpour's neat analysis of #iranelection <http://bit.ly/14jy0Y>  4 retweets Marc Lynch asks "Could there be a Mousavi Effect?" <http://bit.ly/12hkAW> #IranElection #retweet\_thursday  4 retweets RT: @alexlovov: RT @keyvan Expect internet connection problems and new wave of filtering in Iran within next 72 hours. #IranElection  3 retweets




**Jun 12** Mousavi will hold emergency press conference in 15 mins in Tehran <http://havadaran.net/archive/00309.php> #IranElection  6 retweets My conclusions after seeing 100s of #IranElection photos: Tehran looks a lot like Tel-Aviv and ALL Iranian girls are beautiful  5 retweets Reports says more that 80% are electing. This is very high, first time in the history of islamic republic #iranelection  5 retweets

**Jun 13** Latest photos from Tehran: [www.flickr.com/mousavi1388/](http://www.flickr.com/mousavi1388/) (updated every minute) #IranElection  11 retweets Mousavi has been arrested!!!!!! <http://tr.im/oopK> #iranelection  11 retweets SMS is down, Moussavi's websites and Facebook are filtered, state TV is celebrating and people are in the streets. #IranElection

 10 retweets **Jun 14** PLEASE RT (ReTweet) these pictures <http://twitpic.com/7c85I> AND <http://ow.ly/e11H> and this hashtag  348 retweets Dear Iranian People, Mousavi has not left you, he has been put under house arrest by Ministry of Intelligence #IranElection  80 retweets #iranelection We witnessed police spraying pepper gas into the eyes of peaceful female protesters  36 retweets

**Jun 15** Functioning Iran proxies 218.128.112.18:8080 218.206.94.132:808 218.253.65.99:808 219.50.16.70:8080 #iranelection  410 retweets Our Iranian friends can access Twitter from 148.233.239.24 Port:80 in Tehran. Can avoid govt filters from here. #iranelection  131 retweets to other sources: this isn't the police! police is still outside! we're under attack by Ansar-Hezbollah.

#iranelection  67 retweets **Jun 16** Twitter Reschedules Maintenance Around #IranElection Controversy <http://bit.ly/2xWNY> (via  223 retweets RT From Iran: CONFIRMED!! Army moving into Tehran against protesters! PLEASE RT! URGENT! #IranElection  222 retweets RT Open Letter to the World from the People of Iran: <http://tinyurl.com/nw95ev> Please RT.  129 retweets

**Jun 17** Simple ways to help Iranian free speech: <http://is.gd/13U0V> #IranElection #gr88 Pls RT  536 retweets RT from Iran: #IranElection Regime still pretending there's no protest outside Tehran RT this HUGE demo pic NOW- <http://twitpic.com/7ki6e>  250 retweets U.S. Government Asks Twitter to Stay Up for #IranElection Crisis - <http://bit.ly/5Cade>  116 retweets

**Jun 18** RT Add your username to the Green Wall to show support for #iranelection <http://iran.greenthumbnails.com>  272 retweets Mindblowing #IranElection Stats: 221,744 Tweets Per Hour at Peak <http://bit.ly/3xmvpE>  209 retweets to protect us all followers pls change your twt location to IRAN GMT+3.30 - #iranelection RT RT RT  69 retweets

**Jun 19** MOUSAVI APPEALS TO THE WORLD TO PARTICIPATE IN SEA OF GREEN IN ALL CAPITAL CITIES THIS SUNDAY #Iranelection RT RT RT - confirmed  108 retweets RT From Iran: "I have one vote. I gave it to Moussavi. I have one life. I will give it for Freedom." #IranElection  59 retweets RT from Iran: The



situation in Iran is now CRITICAL - the nation is heartbroken - suppression is imminent - #Iranelection  
52 retweets Jun 20 I am prepared For martyrdom, go on strike if I am arrested #IranElection  
174 retweets Courage! Please, please, read this short piece & RT: <http://bit.ly/IQU15> #IranElection  
70 retweets STOP supporting US backed coup in Iran. #IranElection #IranElection 64 retweets  
Jun 21 RT If an innocent girl gets shot halfway across the world, does she make a sound? Yes,  
and the whole world hears her. #IranElection 117 retweets RT "On 9/11, the world said we were all  
Americans. Tonight, we're all Iranian" #IranElection #Neda 79 retweets RT RT WIDELY FIRST AID  
INFO IN FARSI: یک شزپ لگ شم: <http://gr88.tumblr.com/> #IranElection 68 retweets Jun 22 PLEASE  
RT: THIS IS WHY WE PROTEST. @ <http://digg.com/d1uPU9> #iran #iranelection 462 retweets  
Anonymous secure blog RT bypass govt. blocks Free Select Canada to auto-download  
<http://tinyurl.com/nzxc05> #iranelection 188 retweets Help Iran free speech. RT. Anonymous web  
tool. Free. Select country Canada <http://tinyurl.com/nzxc05> #iranelection 119 retweets Jun 23  
RT MOUSAVI Declares ALL IRAN STRIKE TUESDAY & Rest of Week! Do NOT WORK! STAY HOME  
OR PROTEST! Close ALL Bazaars! #IranElection #N 64 retweets #iranelection RT  
<http://iran.greenthumbnails.com/> learn, understand, support 57 retweets FREE SPEECH! DO NOT  
SUPPORT BLOODY COUP IN IRAN! #IranElection Tehran <http://tinyurl.com/m7w4pg> 56 retweets  
Jun 24 New pictures of Neda along with a profile of her life <http://bit.ly/14ebTK> #neda  
64 retweets in Baharestan we saw militia with axe chopping ppl like meat - blood everywhere - like  
butcher - Allah Akbar - #Iranelection 62 retweets they pull away the dead into trucks - like factory -  
no human can do this - we beg Allah for save us - #Iranelection 61 retweets Jun 25 RT  
URGENT FOR WOUNDED!! English & FARSI FIRST AID INFO: (<http://gr88.tumblr.com/>)  
#Iranelection 102 retweets RT Please RT Video June 24th Riot in Baherstan Sq. posted today  
<http://bit.ly/Hrh71> #iranelection 87 retweets Plz send your videos to for media, esp CNN. When  
filming show newspaper to prove date. Very Imp RT RT RT #iranelection 36 retweets Jun 26  
RT - natarsim natarsim ma hame ba ham hastim - Don't be afraid, don't be afraid. We are all in this  
together #IranElection #iran 40 retweets Doctor who was with Neda in her last moments took a risk  
to speak to BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/nrrg63> 30 retweets Statistical analysis suggests fraud in  
#iranelection <http://bit.ly/63MKI> 22 retweets Jun 27 God is Great #Iranelection #revolution  
#neda RT RT RT everybody 70 retweets RT Please RT Video June 24th Riot in Baherstan Sq.  
<http://bit.ly/Hrh71> #iranelection #gr88 32 retweets Check out the new tribute video for #iranelection.  
Dedicated to those protesting in Iran. Amazing video. RT RT RT <http://tinyurl.com/lqpxv> 28 retweets  
Jun 28 British embassy staff arrested in Iran, Foreign Office confirms <http://bit.ly/6jnnP>  
#iranelection 66 retweets Iran government TV: Eight local British embassy staffers arrested  
<http://bit.ly/13hAZ8> #iranelection 28 retweets has been arrested. Some solidarity might not go  
amiss. RT! #iran 20 retweets Jun 29 Bon Jovi, Andy Madadian & Richie S. sing "Stand By  
Me" 2 support #iranelection <http://tr.im/q3hj> 88 retweets #Neda (You Will Not Defeat The People)  
#music video 4 neda and the ppl of Iran 50 retweets Bon Jovi & Iranian Superstar Andy M. sing  
"Stand By Me" 2 support #iranelection <http://tr.im/q3hj> RT 47 retweets Jun 30 RT Support your  
local Iranians! Only shop at 7-11. FREE IRAN!! ... with purchase of any medium size slurpee...  
#iranelection 75 retweets RT Ahmadinejad WINS!!! Everyone else can SUCK IT!!!! #iranelection  
25 retweets RT Please LIGHT a CANDLE for those who have DIED! PLZ RT! #iranelection Iran  
#Neda 6 retweets