Emotions Evoked by Common Words and Phrases:
Using Mechanical Turk to Create an Emotion Lexicon

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Painting

The Destroyer
- Frank Frazetta

Emotions evoked by common words and phrases.
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When your cartoon can get you killed

(Phil, from the San Francisco Chronicle)
speaker/writer

Death threats over South Park episode
Event

listener/reader

Extremists
Participants

Trey Parker, Matt Stone
Participants
Our focus: words

When your cartoon can get you killed, it evokes joy.

When your error evokes sadness, it shows a deeper understanding of words.

cartoon
killed

evokes joy

evokes sadness
Motivation for emotion detection

- Devising automatic **dialogue systems** that respond appropriately to different emotional states of the user.
  - customer relation models
  - intelligent tutoring systems
  - emotion-aware games
- Tracking sentiment towards politicians, movies, products.
- Determining **emotional intelligence**.
- Assisting in writing e-mails, documents, and other text to convey desired emotion (and avoiding misinterpretation).
- Detecting how people use emotion-bearing-words to persuade and coerce others
- Deception detection

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Which emotions?

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Base emotions

- **Ekman**: 6 basic emotions
  - joy, *sadness*, fear, *anger*, surprise, disgust
- **Plutchik**: 8
  - Ekman’s 6 + anticipation + trust
  - 4 pairs of antonymous emotions
- More proposals by Parrot, Loyban, and others
Plutchik’s wheel of emotions

- Similar emotions are adjacent
- Contrasting emotions are diametrically opposite
- The radius indicates intensity
- In the white spaces are the primary dyads – emotions that are combinations of the primary emotions

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Amazon’s Mechanical Turk

- **Requester**
  - breaks task into small independent units – **HITs**
  - specifies:
    - compensation for solving each HIT
    - # of independent annotations required for each HIT
      a.k.a. # of **assignments/HIT**
  - uploads HITs
- **Turkers**
  - attempt as many HITs as they wish
- **Requester**
  - inspects each assignment: approves or rejects

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Amazon’s Mechanical Turk: Features

- Inexpensive
  - $1/hour is not uncommon

- Convenient
  - Web-based
  - Scripts to upload HITs and review assignments

- Takes care of certain ethics issues
  - Anonymity
  - No pressure on workers to solve HITs
Amazon’s Mechanical Turk: Challenges

- Malicious annotations
  - Random selection or garbage data entry
  - Deliberate incorrect annotation

- Inadvertent and infrequent errors
  - Turkner attempts HITs for unfamiliar words too
Emotion annotation: Challenges

• Words used in different senses and in different contexts can evoke different emotions.

  High aspect ratio wings allow low speed flight.

  The fight or flight response is crucial for survival.

• How to convey the target sense to the annotator?
  ◦ definitions are long
  ◦ need to discourage annotation for unfamiliar words
Our solution

**Directions:** Attempt HIT only if you are familiar with the word. Words in different senses may have different emotion associations. Question 1 will guide you to the intended sense.

Q1. Which word is closest in meaning (most related) to flight?
   - buying
   - avoidance
   - doubt
   - boredom

- Near-synonym is taken from a thesaurus.
  - Categories in a thesaurus act as coarse senses
- Three distracters are chosen at random
Emotion annotation: Challenges

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Identifying bad assignments

- If the word choice question is answered wrongly, then the whole assignment is discarded (answers to all questions in the HIT by the Turker are discarded).

- If an annotator gets more than 1 in 3 questions wrong, then we assume they are not following instructions.
  - We reject all their assignments.
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Will detect it 75% of the time.
Target n-grams

- Conditions:
  - Most frequent terms in the Google n-gram corpus
  - Must be in the thesaurus in just one or two categories
- Most frequent monosemous n-grams in each of the following categories:
  - noun unigrams (200)
  - noun bigrams (200)
  - verb unigrams (200)
  - verb bigrams (200)
  - adjective unigrams (200)
  - adjective bigrams (200)
  - adverb unigrams (200)
  - adverb bigrams (200)
Target n-grams (continued)

- Most frequent monosemous terms in the General Inquirer (GI) that are:
  - marked as positive (200)
  - marked as negative (200)

- Terms in WordNet Affect Lexicon (WAL) that have one or two senses and are:
  - marked as anger terms (107)
  - marked as disgust terms (25)
  - marked as fear terms (58)
  - marked as joy terms (109)
  - marked as sadness terms (86)
  - marked as surprise terms (39)

2176 terms in all.
Questions:

1. Which word is closest in meaning (most related) to flight?
   - buying
   - avoidance
   - doubt
   - boredom

2. How positive (good, praising) is flight
   (for example, nice and excellent are strongly positive):
   - flight is not positive
   - flight is weakly positive
   - flight is moderately positive
   - flight is strongly positive
Questions (continued):

3. How negative (bad, criticizing) is flight (for example, poor and pathetic are strongly negative):
   - flight is not negative
   - flight is weakly negative
   - flight is moderately negative
   - flight is strongly negative

4. How much does flight evoke/produce the emotion joy (for example, happy and fun may strongly evoke joy):
   - flight does not evoke joy
   - flight weakly evokes joy
   - flight moderately evokes joy
   - flight strongly evokes joy
Numbers

- 2176 (HITs) x 5 (assignments per HIT) = 10,880 assignments
- Annotators: 1012
- Turkers spent on average about 1 minute per HIT
- Hourly wage was about $2.40 (about 4 cents per HIT)
- Total cost: US $470 (cost per term: about 22 cents)
- More than 95% of the assignments had the correct answer for the word choice question.
  - The rest were discarded.
- 2081 terms had 3 or more valid assignments
  - on average 4.75 assignments per HIT

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Evocative and non-evocative

- Practical NLP applications may care for only two levels of intensity
- Example: vampire-fear

No fear  weak fear  moderate fear  strong fear
0 votes  1 vote    2 votes    2 votes

non-evocative  1 vote
evocative  4 votes

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Percent of most frequent terms evocative of different emotions
% of WAL anger terms evocative of different emotions as per the Turkers

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What was missed?

baffled
covetousness
exacerbate
gravel
pesky
pestering
Anger and Joy!

adjourn
credit card
find out
gloat
spontaneously
surprised
Agreement at two intensity levels: Majority class \((m) = 3, 4, 5\)

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Conclusions

- Regular folks can produce high quality emotion annotations with proper guidelines and checks:
  - Annotations match those in GI and WAL
  - High degree of agreement
    - Anticipation and trust are sources of more disagreement
- A large number of commonly used terms are evocative:
  - About 61% of the terms are evocative (evoke one or the other base emotion)
Current work

When your cartoon can get you killed, it may evoke an association with sadness.
% of terms where all 5 agree

Evokes  Associated

anger anticipation disgust fear joy sadness surprise trust average
Current and future work

- Determining which terms have strong color associations and if there is a correlation with emotions.
- Determine how much near synonyms vary in emotional content.
- Empirically verify if complex emotions are indeed combinations of basic emotions.
- Create a much larger lexicon (40,000 terms, say).
  - Make lexicon publicly available.
- Use lexicon in applications.
Questions.
Comparison with GI

GI positives

![Bar chart showing emotions evoked by common words and phrases.]

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Comparison with GI

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% of WAL joy terms evocative of different emotions as per the Turkers

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Amazon’s Mechanical Turk: Challenges

- Annotator time is precious
  - Minimum reading, minimum writing
  - Maximum information throughput

- Requestor time is precious
  - Automatic review and assimilation of annotations

**One solution**: Multiple choice questions, with examples instead of explanations.
Example question

How much does vampire evoke/produce the emotion fear? (For example, horror and scary may strongly evoke fear.)

- vampire does not evoke fear
- vampire weakly evokes fear
- vampire moderately evokes fear
- vampire strongly evokes fear