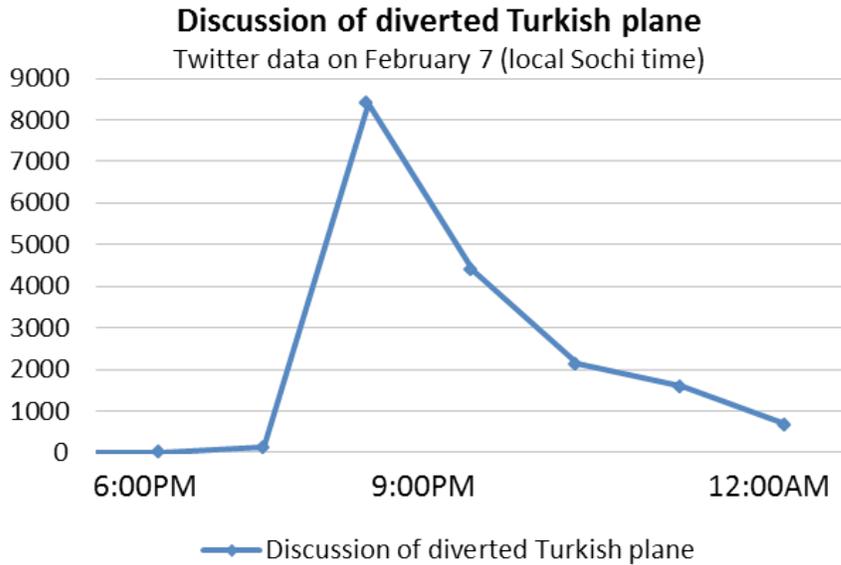


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SPOTLIGHT ON SOCHI: Social Media Analysis Series



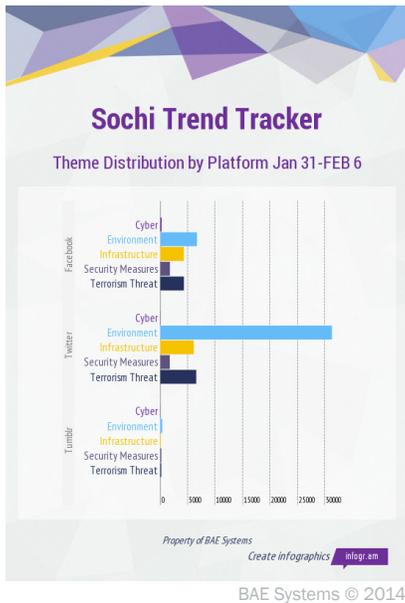
PAGEANTRY OVER POLITICS

BAE Systems is partnering with Homeland Security Today magazine to produce a daily report that provides a unique perspective on the 2014 winter games in Sochi, Russia.

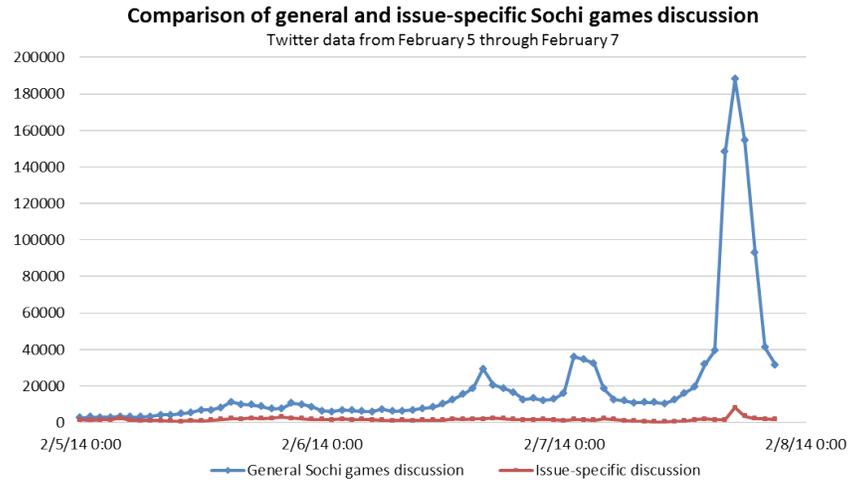
Throughout the duration of the winter games (February 5-23), the BAE Systems Advanced Analytics Lab will be studying social media data to convey trends in the public dialogue around security, infrastructure, transportation, cyber events, and environmental concerns.

The opening ceremonies could be considered the height of the winter games hype—the peak of anticipation and speculation. After the ceremonies, we find out for certain who wins, whether fears of a terror attack were warranted, and what the viewing public truly cares about. Unfortunately, most Americans had to wait a little longer than everyone else. While America anxiously awaited its high definition, yet eight-hour delayed broadcast of the opening ceremonies, much of the world and anyone who needed the news in real time turned to social media. We certainly did.

Conversation during the run up to the games was dominated by a raft of political and security discussions. With no athletic competition to cover or medal podiums to photograph, the opening ceremonies are a ready-made soapbox for turning up the volume on those political grievances. In the States and around the world, many hours were dedicated to debate over gay rights, animal cruelty, international terrorism,



environmentalism, freedom of speech, personal privacy, and other sensitive topics. But is the furor over those issues strong enough to stand up to the pomp, circumstance, and enchantment of the opening ceremonies? Anecdotally, we thought it just might be, but knew we had to let the data tell the story. Friday afternoon—hours before the primetime American broadcast—the Advanced Analytics Lab monitored social media chatter during the opening ceremonies to discover if security and political issues would trend neck and neck with those about the ceremonies, as they have over the past week. The comparison could lend an ear to the true voice of what matters to the games’ international audience. Here is what we found:



As it turns out, neither politics nor security were a match for the majesty of the show in the social media sphere, at least for a few hours. For as fickle as social media can be, though, security concerns are never far from reach. The chart below represents how rumors of a hijacked Turkish airliner reportedly en route to Sochi sparked mumblings in participatory media.

Friday’s data further underscores the fact that a medium as dynamic as social media can result in both fleeting and event-driven, possibilities.

Concerns about security issues, and likewise their social media chatter about them, change constantly as the environment around the winter games evolves. Understanding how and why those changes occur will help us better understand both the mood on the ground in Sochi and emerging concerns from the worldwide audience. For the duration of the games, the Advanced Analytics Lab is tracking dynamic social media activity related to common security issues by category and will report daily on how that discussion progresses.

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