Why Is Twitter All the Rage?

There are many ways to answer this question, but let's consider it from an overarching angle that addresses some fundamental aspects of our shared humanity that any technology needs to account for in order to be useful and successful. After all, the purpose of technology is to enhance our human experience.

As humans, what are some things that we want that technology might help us to get?

- We want to be heard.

- We want to satisfy our curiosity.

- We want it easy.

- We want it now.

In the context of the current discussion, these are just a few observations that are generally true of humanity. We have a deeply rooted need to share our ideas and experiences, which gives us the ability to connect with other people, to be heard, and to feel a sense of worth and importance. We are curious about the world around us and how to organize and manipulate it, and we use communication to share our observations, ask questions, and engage with other people in meaningful dialogues about our quandaries.

The last two bullet points highlight our inherent intolerance to friction. Ideally, we don't want to have to work any harder than is absolutely necessary to satisfy our curiosity or get any particular job done; we'd rather be doing "something else" or moving on to the next thing because our time on this planet is so precious and short. Along similar lines, we want things now and tend to be impatient when actual progress doesn't happen at the speed of our own thought.

One way to describe Twitter is as a microblogging service that allows people to communicate with short, 140-character messages that roughly correspond to thoughts or ideas. In that regard, you could think of Twitter as being akin to a free, high-speed, global text-messaging service.

In other words, whereas some social websites like Facebook and LinkedIn require the mutual acceptance of a connection between users (which usually implies a real-world connection of some kind), Twitter's relationship model allows you to keep up with the latest happenings of any other user, even though that other user may not choose to follow you back or even know that you exist. Twitter's following model is simple but exploits a fundamental aspect of what makes us human: our curiosity. Whether it be an infatuation with celebrity gossip, an urge to keep up with a favourite sports team, a keen interest in a particular political topic, or a desire to connect with someone new, Twitter provides you with boundless opportunities to satisfy your curiosity.

Think of an interest graph as a way of modeling connections between people and their arbitrary interests. Interest graphs provide a profound number of possibilities in the data mining

realm that primarily involve measuring correlations between things for the objective of making intelligent recommendations and other applications in machine learning.

For example, you could use an interest graph to measure correlations and make recommendations ranging from whom to follow on Twitter to what to purchase online to whom you should date. To illustrate the notion of Twitter as an interest graph, consider that a Twitter user need not be a real person; it very well could be a person, but it could also be an inanimate object, a company, a musical group, an imaginary persona, an impersonation of someone (living or dead), or just about anything else.