

## Purpose

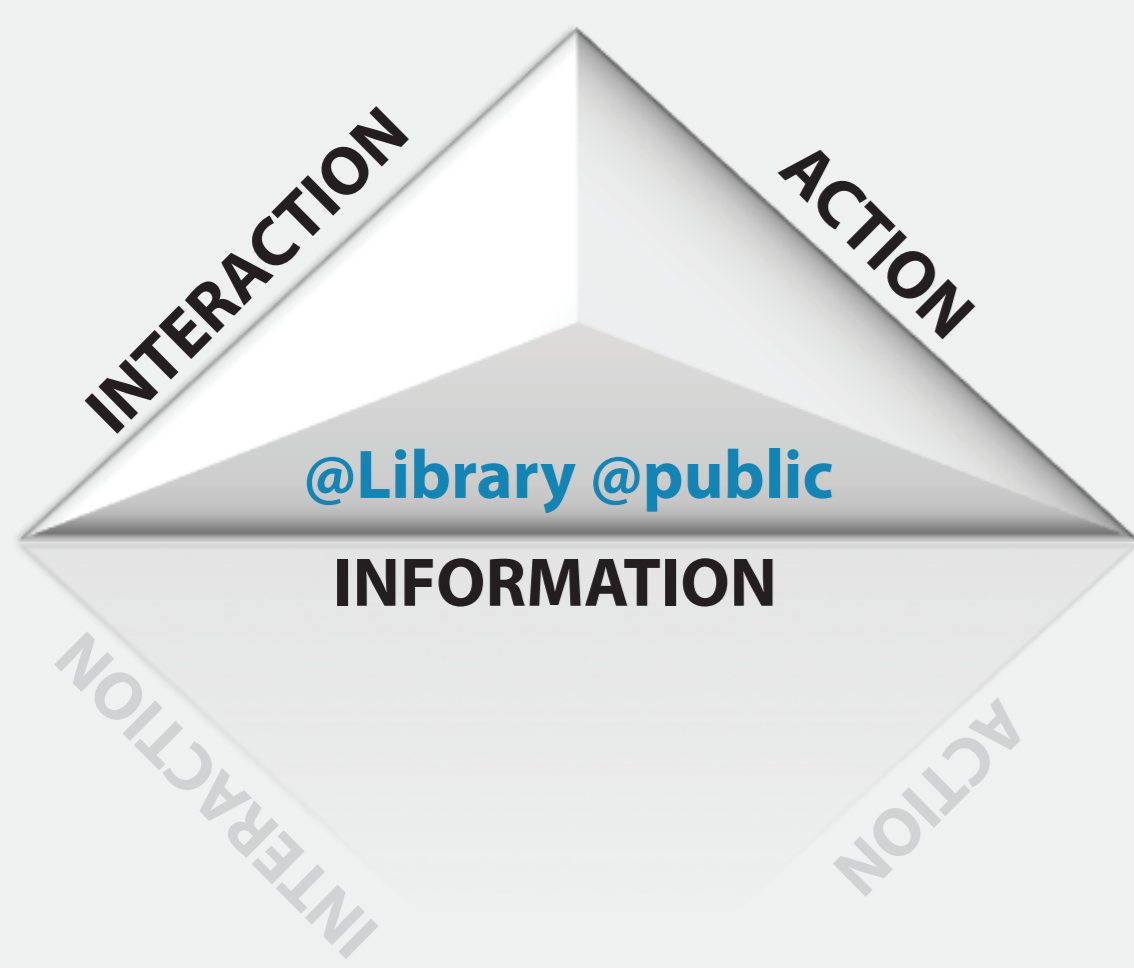
This project explores how Canadian public libraries use micro-blogging through Twitter to promote Canadian literature.

Social-Biblio.ca is an open, online, real-time archive of Canadian public libraries' Twitter interactions including reports on basic measures of influence.

## Research Questions

How do Canadian public libraries talk about Canadian literature with their Twitter followers?

## Framework



Adapted from Lovejoy & Saxton (2012)

Three main functions of micro-blogging (Twitter) observed among non-profit organizations with varying degrees of organization-client interaction: a) one-way information or broadcasting; b) two-way interaction; and c) call to action or mobilization.

## What is Canadian Literature?

There are many definitions of "Canadian literature" ranging from those based on theme (Atwood, 1972; Sutherland, 1967; Gorjup, 2012; Vassanji, 2006) to those based on author nationality (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2012; Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2012). "Canadian literature" can also include novels written by authors who are, or identify as, Canadian or who are eligible for Canadian literary awards such as the Giller or Governor General literary awards (C. Sugars, personal communication, November 15, 2012).

## What is Readers' Advisory?

Readers' advisory (RA) is a "patron-centered library service for [...] leisure readers" which began in the early 1920s (Saricks, 2010). Libraries use RA to provide reading suggestions to users based on connections "between readers and the books they enjoy, and between books offering a similar reading experience" (Welch, 2010 p. 94). RA service has developed into one "of the fastest-growing services" in libraries (Moyer & Stover, 2010, p. ix) and is conducted through many forms of communication from in-person interviews, to printed book lists, to social media networking (Moyer & Stover, 2010; Maatta, 2010).

# Social-biblio.ca: What's in a @publiclibrary #canlit tweet?

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## Method

Socialbiblio.ca is an online archive of Canadian public library Tweets. The Twitter hashtag (#) "associates a user-defined tag with Tweet content" (Chang and Iyer, 2012). Because of the many ways in which Canadian literature can be identified, there were potentially thousands of hashtags that could be related to Canadian literature. This project focused on the hashtag #Canlit because although intrinsically exclusive, #Canlit was deemed the most inclusive and generally reflective option compared to any alternatives that would have limited the data set to tweets mentioning a particular author, work or award.

A content analysis of these #Canlit Tweets, a total of 358 tweets from February 28, 2012 to October 31st, 2012, was conducted.



Source: <http://www.cbc.ca/books/2010/12/canlit-quiz-2010-in-canadian-literature.html>

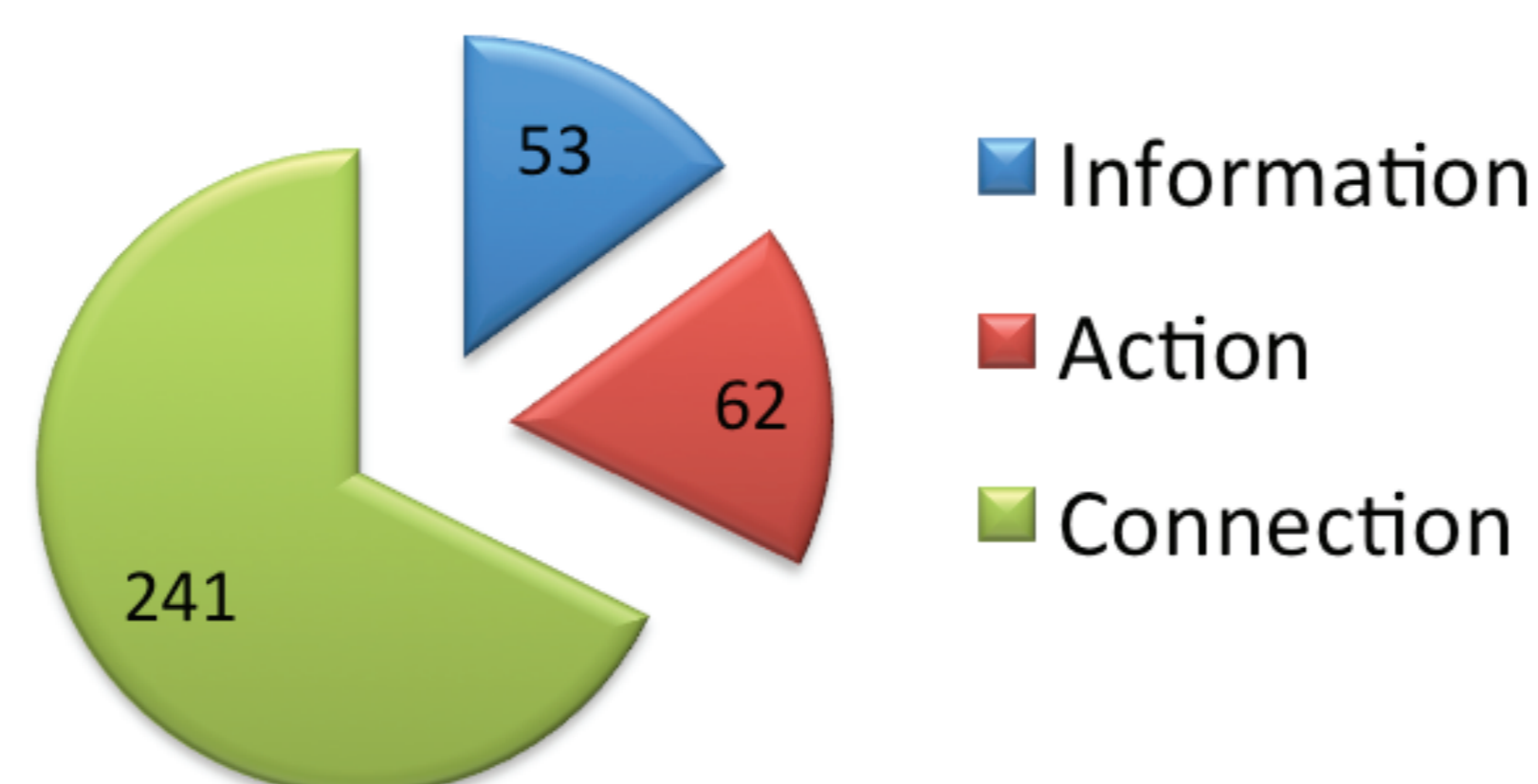
## Findings

Data analysis consisted of two phases of coding. The first phase sought to identify how Canadian public libraries are using Twitter as a communication platform. Is it being used as an electronic bulletin board with the expectation of passive reception of information by library followers? Were libraries using Twitter as a means to encourage bilateral communication with their communities? Tweets were divided into three modes of interaction: a) Information b) Connection and c) Action (adapted from Lovejoy and Saxton, 2012).

### Coding Phase 1

<b>Information</b>	captures one-way broadcasting or information dissemination
<b>Connection</b>	captures sentiment or other interactions between two Twitter accounts
<b>Action</b>	captures verbing actions (e.g., "join" "participate" "follow" "read this ...")

### Phase 1 - Coding for interaction

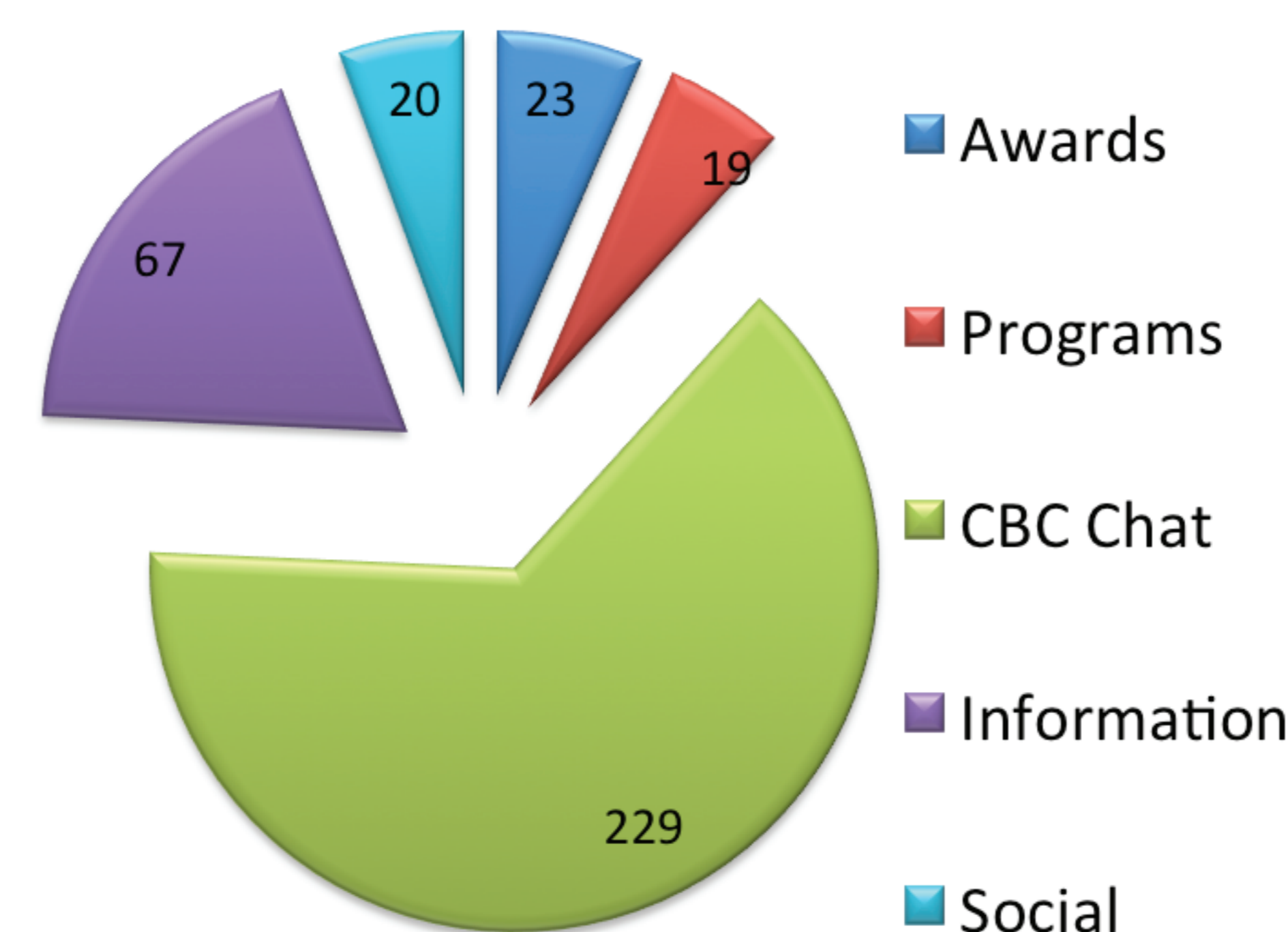


A second coding phase captured the subject of the "talk" Were libraries and their followers engaging over particular programs? Were particular actors stimulating more conversation than others? Can we tell anything about the use of the hashtag #Canlit in particular? These categories emerged from this analysis:

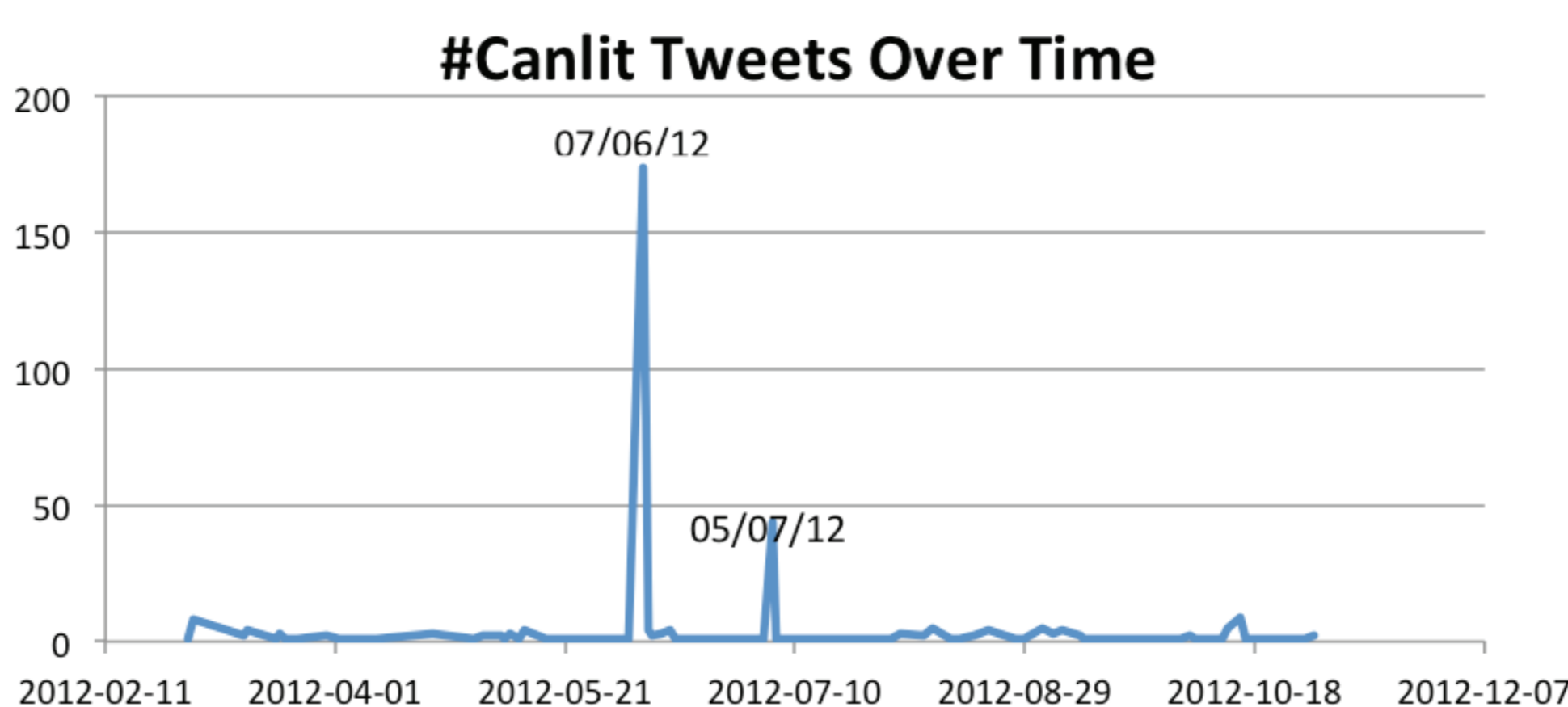
### Coding Phase 2

<b>Programs</b>	library sponsored or related book programs involving an activity or event
<b>Program Chat</b>	in this case the CBC Books monthly #Canlit chat was widely tweeted
<b>Awards</b>	references to the many Canadian book awards
<b>Reference</b>	questions related to books and readers, suggesting sources for further information
<b>Social</b>	tweets that are primarily social in nature (e.g., expressions of appreciation, thanks, and 'shout-outs')

### Phase 2 - Coding for content



The graph of #Canlit Tweets Over Time shows two spikes on June 7 and July 5 which demonstrate the dominance of CBC chats in the use of the hashtag #Canlit. The topic of the CBC chat on June 7th was public libraries which would also explain the spike in library tweeting.



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## Discussion

By choosing the hashtag #Canlit, it was hoped that the most general and inclusive sample of tweets could be harvested in order to understand how Canadian public libraries are engaging with the followers on the subject of Canadian literature. The first level of coding showed that the majority of the tweets in the sample were 'connections', meaning that they were two-way communications incorporating some degree of emotion. The second level of coding showed that the majority of the tweets in the sample were generated by a scheduled monthly 'chat' event in partnership with CBC Books that uses the hashtag #Canlit. CBC Books is clearly an important influence on public libraries and their Twitter followers engaging in online discussion.

## Conclusion

This research raises unexpected and fascinating questions about the use of Twitter by Canadian public libraries and their partners. Is CBC Books the major player using the hashtag #Canlit? To what extent have libraries used this hashtag outside of the CBC chat context? The data set in this project indicates that it is definitely used outside of this context, but by far the most active use is within the CBC-led chat. A larger sample over more time would be necessary to develop any further conclusions concerning the use of #Canlit. Is CBC Books taking leadership of the use of this hashtag? If so, is this appropriate? What are the alternatives? The prominence of CBC in #Canlit Tweets could pose a potential problem if libraries use Twitter as a readers' advisory tool. Readers can feel "passed off" when they do not receive personal service from their library (Saricks, 2005, p. 15). Thus, public libraries directing followers to CBC may result in dissatisfaction from users seeking information about Canadian literature from libraries themselves.

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