

TECH

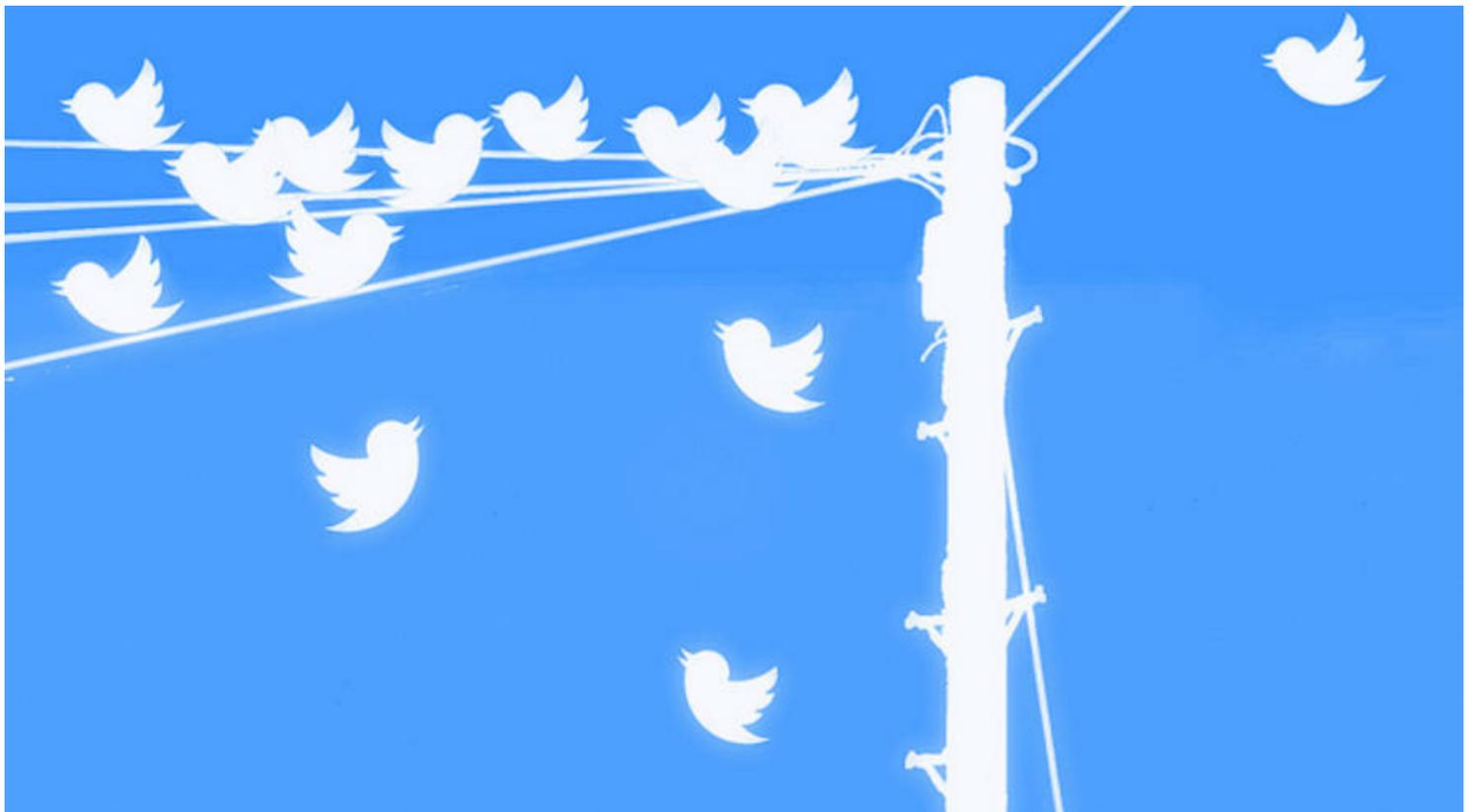
   

# If you're happy and you know it, write a tweet

By [Ben Johnson](#) and [Aparna Alluri](#)

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Words used in tweets are just some of the sources the "hedonometer" pulls from to determine happiness. - [mkhmarketing/Flickr](#)

Vermont is the happiest state in the country, according to a data-based meter that measures people's happiness in real time.

"[Hedonometer](#)," as it's called, sources words from tweets, movie subtitles, e-books, and

just about any sort of publicly accessible electronic text available online. Each word is scored on a nine-point scale of happiness. The meter then parses around 50 million tweets each day to find out if people are using happy or sad words.

And people in Vermont were using happy words the most in the last 30 days, says Chris Danforth, who is on the team that developed the hedonometer: “People are talking about the amazing snow and being out with their family.”

Danforth, a professor of mathematical, natural and technical sciences at the University of Vermont, says this can be a useful tool for public policy.

If there was a decision to be made, he says, about funding or changes in policy, the hedonometer could track people’s reactions in real-time. “Rather than using some anecdotal tweet, you can look at the big data perspective on how people are feeling,” he says.

*Follow Ben Johnson at [@@TheBrockJohnson](#).*

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