grief-stricken in a crowd

THE LANGUAGE OF BEREAVEMENT AND DISTRESS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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I still cry for you all the time. Everyone says it gets better, but it does not. I miss you more and more […] I wish they had myspace in heaven so you could respond…

“We will never forget you [online]”
Brubaker & Hayes, CSCW ‘11
Happy birthday lady! I miss you so much and wish you were here to celebrate our birthdays together. I know your watching out for all of us each and every day. Love ya!

Jessica lynn
Jul 26 2009 9:53 AM

happy birthday ashley nicole! i wish you were here... i can’t believe its almost been four years. it still seems so unreal. my life will never be the same; i miss you so much... i love you!

Mo money
Jul 25 2009 10:13 PM

Hey girl i miss you! its come around again as u know, I wish u were here so we could celebrate your bday once more. Plus i wanna to let u know im Having a Lil Boy. Im 25weeks on ur bday which is nice to remember. Wish you were here to see him grow up. I miss you and will see you someday. Love You
can we describe grief?
theorizing grief
theorizing grief

MOURNING the overall process of acknowledging and accommodating loss

theorizing grief

**MOURNING** the overall process of acknowledging and accommodating loss

**ACUTE GRIEF REACTIONS** reactions to the perception of that loss

dataset

2213 post-mortem comments
1660 unique authors

652 deceased profiles
Age of death: 27.68 (SD=13.06)
66.7% male
developing a codebook
developing a codebook

1. Identified extreme comments
developing a codebook

1. Identified extreme comments
2. Open coding for features
developing a codebook

1. Identified extreme comments
2. Open coding for features
3. Developed rules
developing a codebook

1. Identified extreme comments
2. Open coding for features
3. Developed rules
4. Reliability assessment
qualitative coding

Every day has been terrible since you've been gone. I feel like anything could just push me over the edge. I hold the memories of your smiles dear and I try to make my own like I know you would want me to, but I still can’t think of you without the pain.
qualitative coding

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persistent state of distress
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persistent state of distress

expressions of pain
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persistent state of distress

expressions of pain

Currently experiencing pain.
qualitative coding

We will never forget you.

We miss you a lot, but I know you are watching over us from heaven. Love you!

It still hurts to think of you, and I know I will always miss you, but I am still glad that I was fortunate enough to be in your life.
qualitative coding

We will never forget you.

emotionally ambiguous

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qualitative coding

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emotionally ambiguous

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prosaic funeral speech

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Qualitative Coding

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It still hurts to think of you, and I know I will always miss you, but I am still glad that I was fortunate enough to be in your life.
reliability assessment

100 comments double coded
Agreement: 90%, Kappa: .71

20 comments coded by 8 external coders
Agreement: 84.4%

Rate of emotional distress: 12.5%
can we describe grief?
analysis of language use

1. What are people talking about?

2. How are people talking about it?
analysis of language use

1. What are people talking about?
   positive emotion, sadness, anger, social processes

2. How are people talking about it?
   word count, pronouns, conjunctions, negations, adverbs, tense
language of emotional distress

1. Independent samples T tests.
2. Two binary logistic regression models.
results (T-tests)
**results (models)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>LINGUISTIC STYLE</strong></th>
<th>Higher use of word count, FPS, adverbs, conjunctions, negations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower use of SP, TPS, TPP, future tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SENTIMENT</strong></td>
<td>Higher use of anger words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower levels of positive emotion, sadness words.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
numbers to words
numbers to words

1. less is less [emotional distress]
numbers to words

1. less is less [emotional distress]
2. less you and we, more me
numbers to words

1. less is less [emotional distress]
2. less you and we, more me
3. too sad to talk about it, too angry to stop
numbers to words

1. less is less [emotional distress]
2. less you and we, more me
3. too sad to talk about it, to angry to stop
4. embellishing the past
studying the bereaved

writing in a naturalistic setting

first step towards predictive models
Facebook Explains 'Report Suicidal Content' Tool

Facebook on Tuesday announced a new suicide prevention tool that has since drawn enormous attention, praise and head-scratching around the Web. "The new service enables Facebook users to report a suicidal comment they see posted by a friend to Facebook using either the Report Suicidal Content link or the report links found throughout the site," wrote U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin in a post on Facebook's Safety Blog on Tuesday afternoon. Now Facebook has explained the tool and the process...

DON'T GIVE UP
Thanks for Your Help
Thanks for your feedback. You can Undo this action or Report it as abusive.
Is this post about you or a friend?

Yes, this post is about me or a friend:
- I don't like this post
- It's harassing me
- It's harassing a friend

No, this post is about something else:
- Spam or scam
- Hate speech
- Violence or harmful behavior

Choose a type:
- Credible threat of violence
- Self-harm
- Suicidal Content
- Graphic violence
- Theft or vandalism
- Illegal drug use

Continue Cancel
sensitizing technology

Technology has dramatically altered the way Americans grieve for, and memorialize, the dead.
sensitizing technology to the entire lifespan

Technology has dramatically altered the way Americans grieve for, and memorialize, the dead.
thanks. questions?

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