

Social Media Use in the Queensland Floods and Christchurch Earthquake

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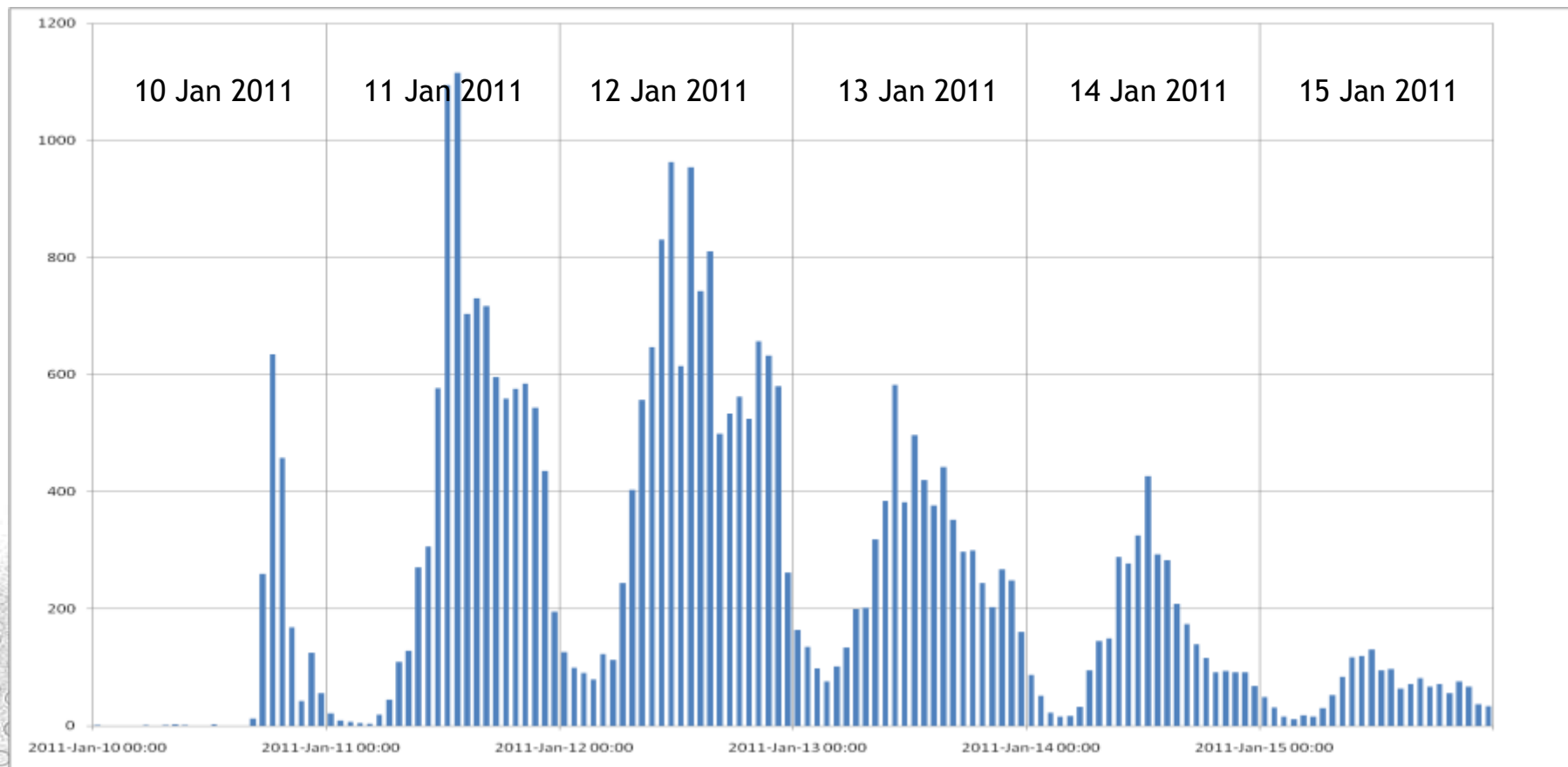
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<http://mappingonlinepublics.net/>

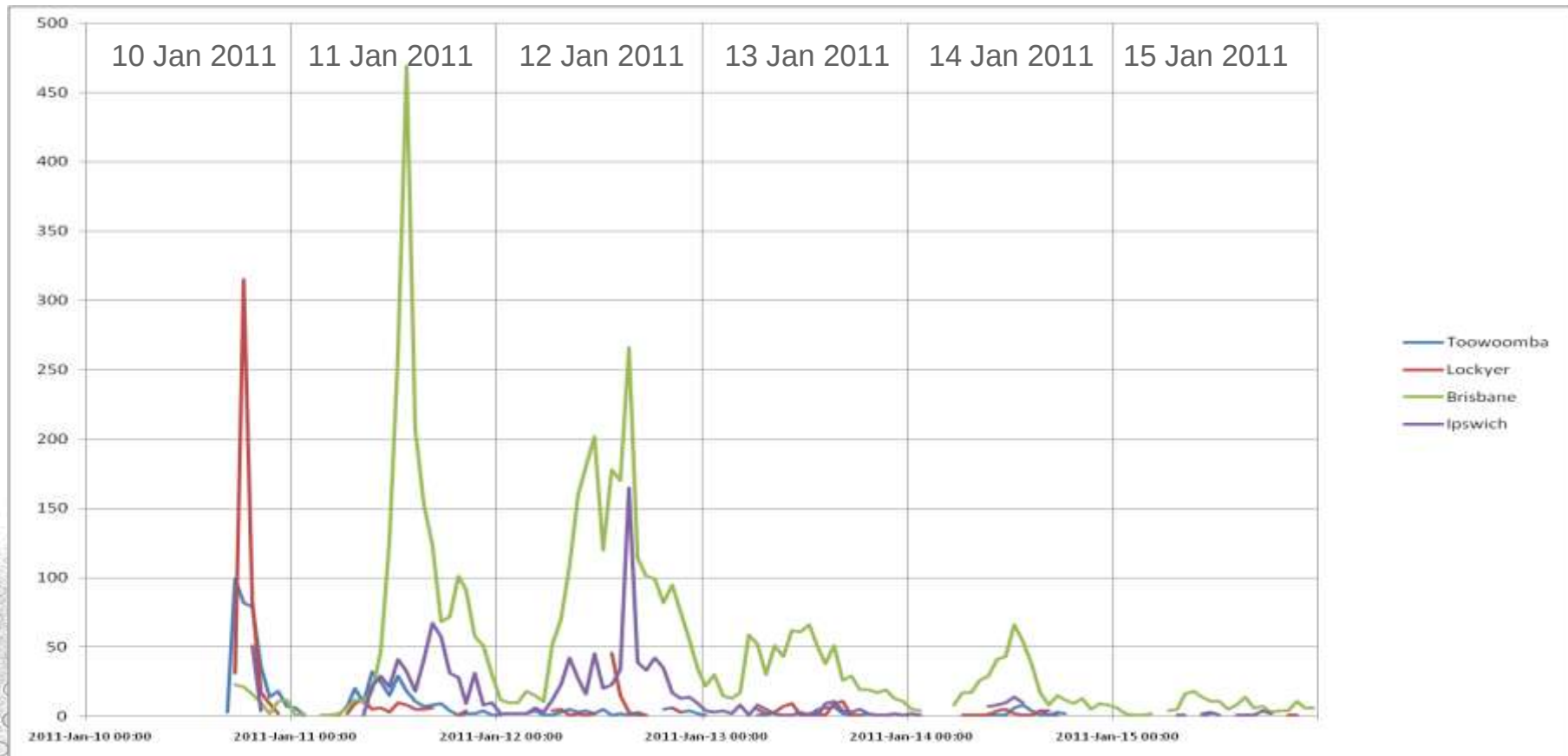
Social Media during Emergencies

- Changing media ecologies:
 - Social media as part of everyday media use
 - Various platforms:
 - *Facebook, Twitter*, blogs - updates and information
 - *YouTube, Flickr, Twitpic* - first-hand video and photos
 - *Google Maps, Ushahidi* - map-based information mashups
 - ➔ Different tools for different purposes
- Various levels of maturity:
 - Uses and use practices still developing
 - Different demographic reach
- Technological differences:
 - e.g. *Facebook*: built around personal networks; semi-private; discussion threads
 - e.g. *Twitter*: open, flat network; public #hashtag conversations; update stream

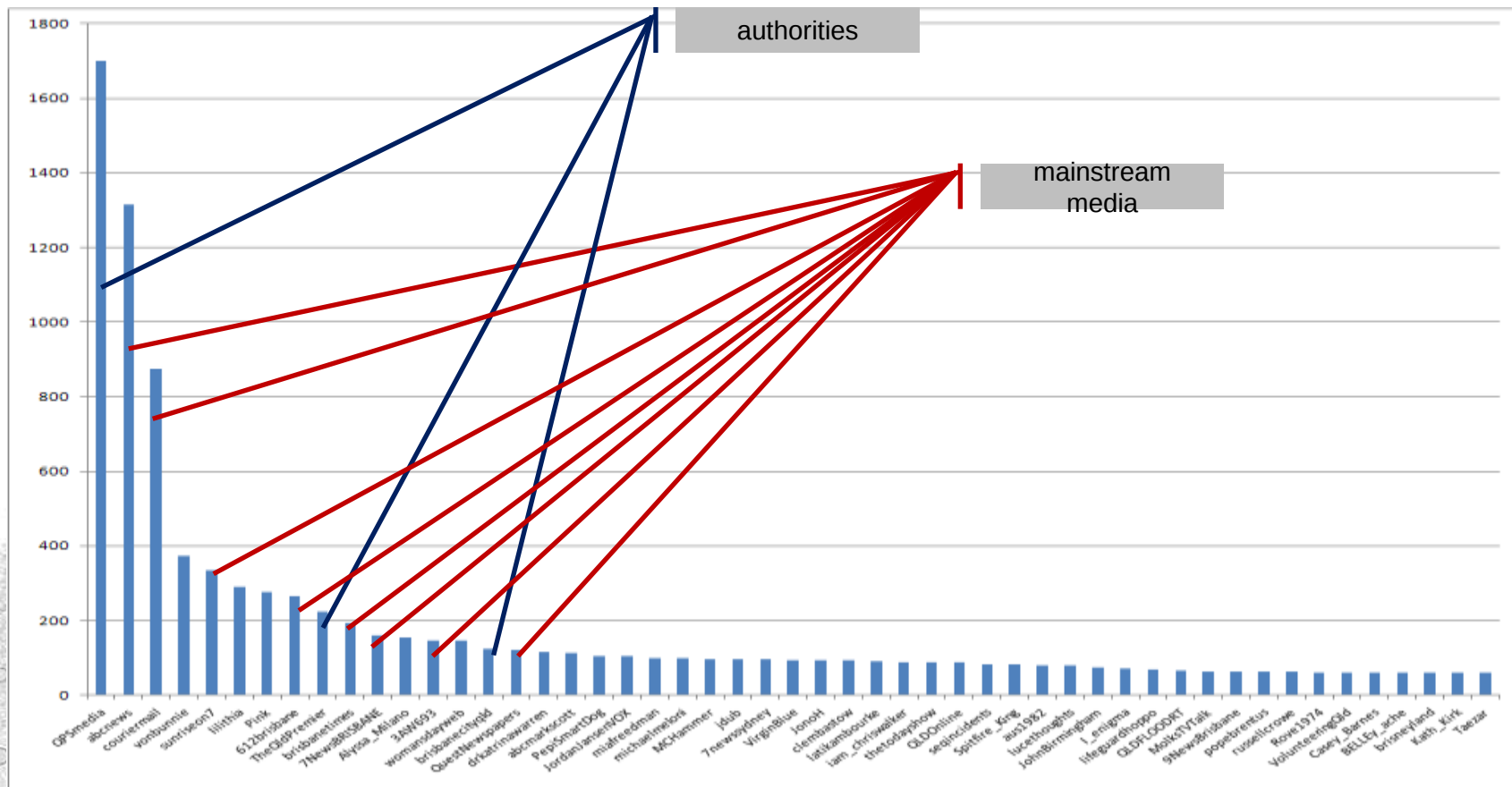
Twitter and the Queensland Floods: #qldfloods tweets



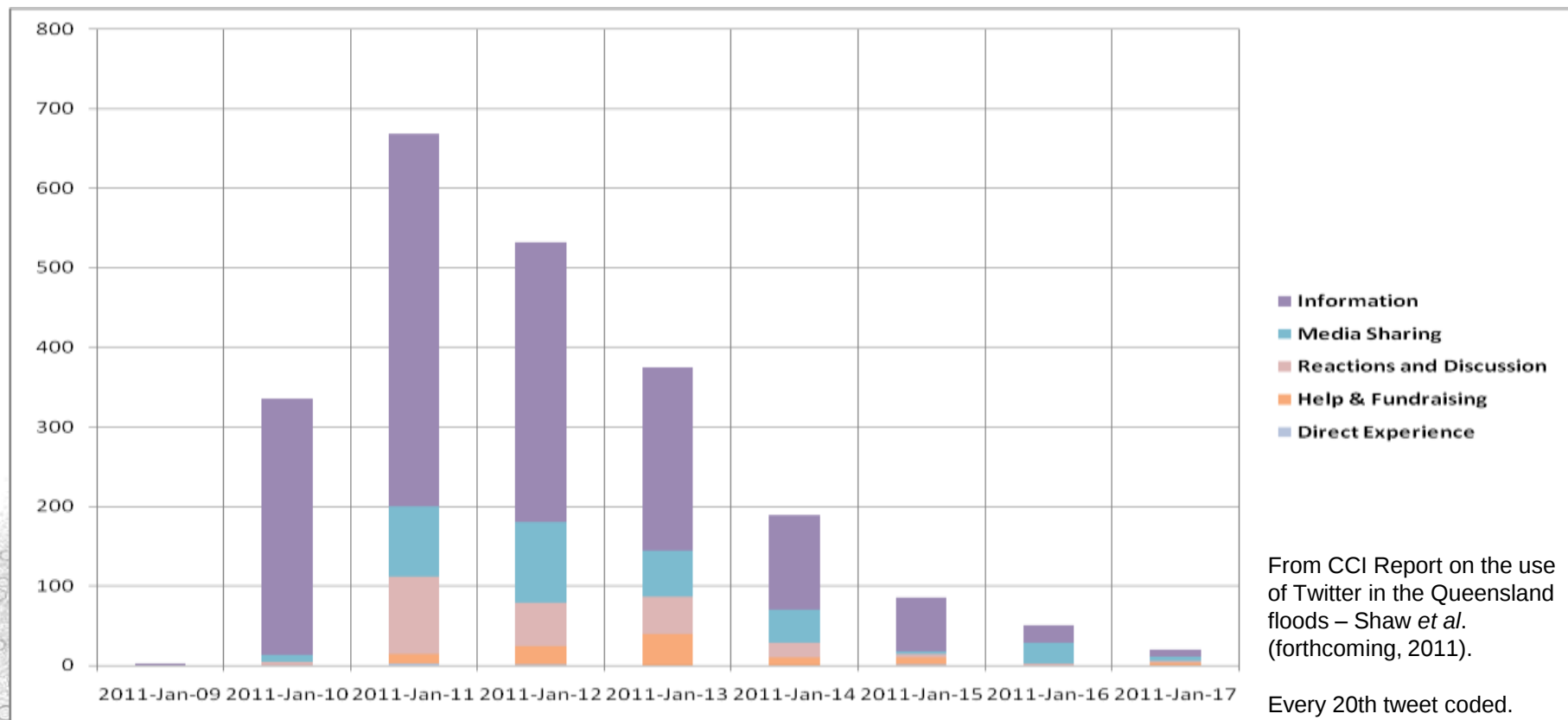
Local Focus: #qldfloods from Toowoomba to Brisbane



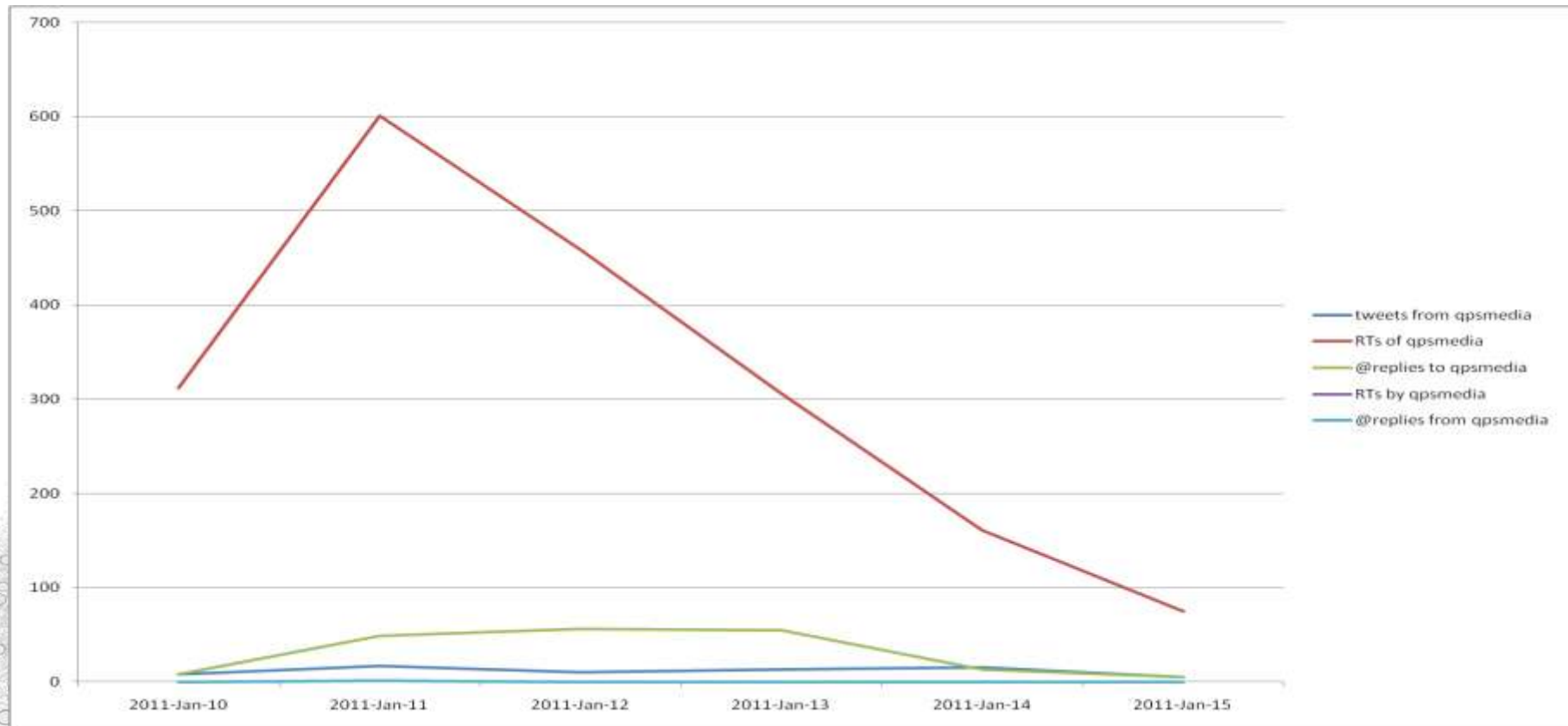
Twitter and the Queensland Floods: #qldfloods @replies



Twitter and the Queensland Floods: #qldfloods themes



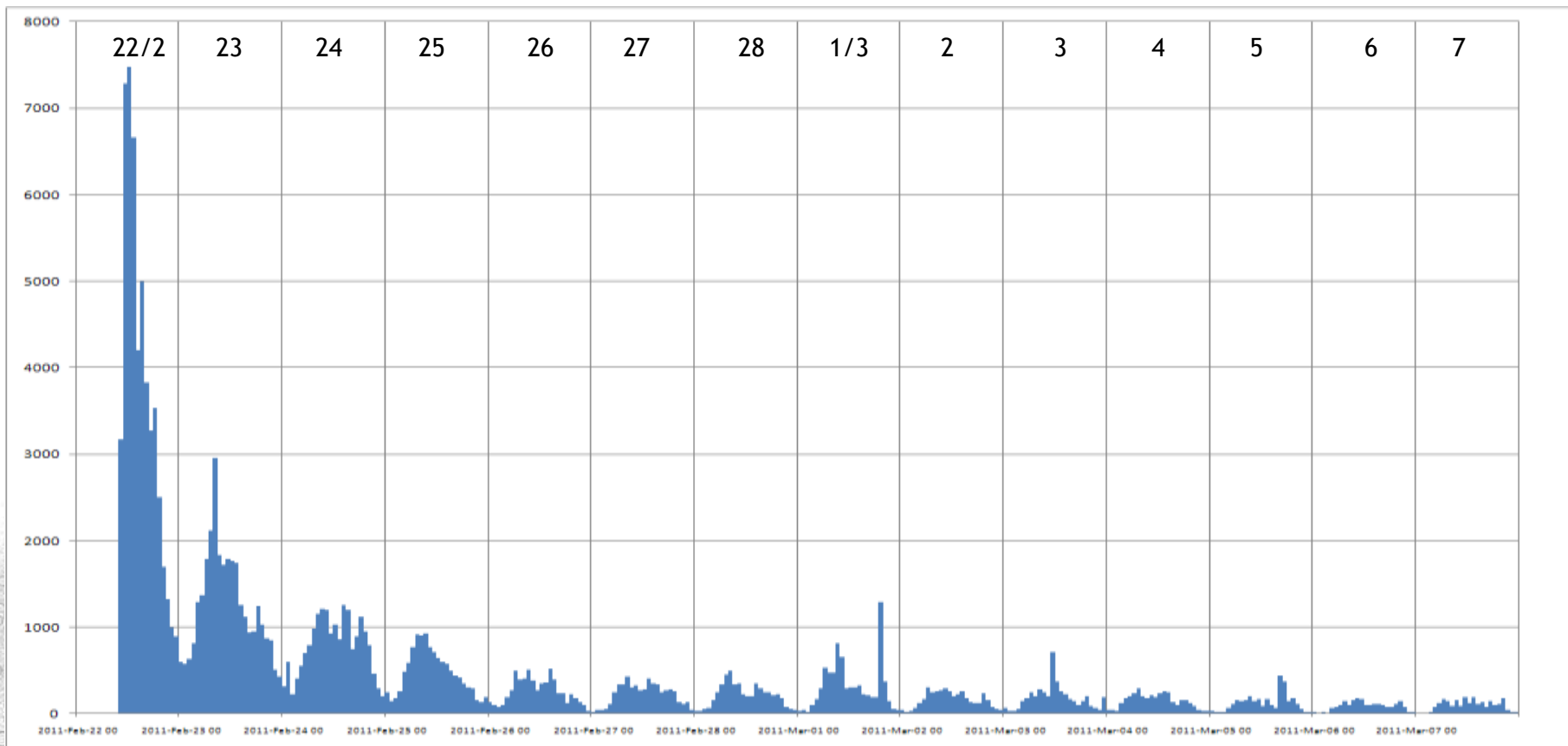
@QPSmedia as Central #qldfloods Information Source



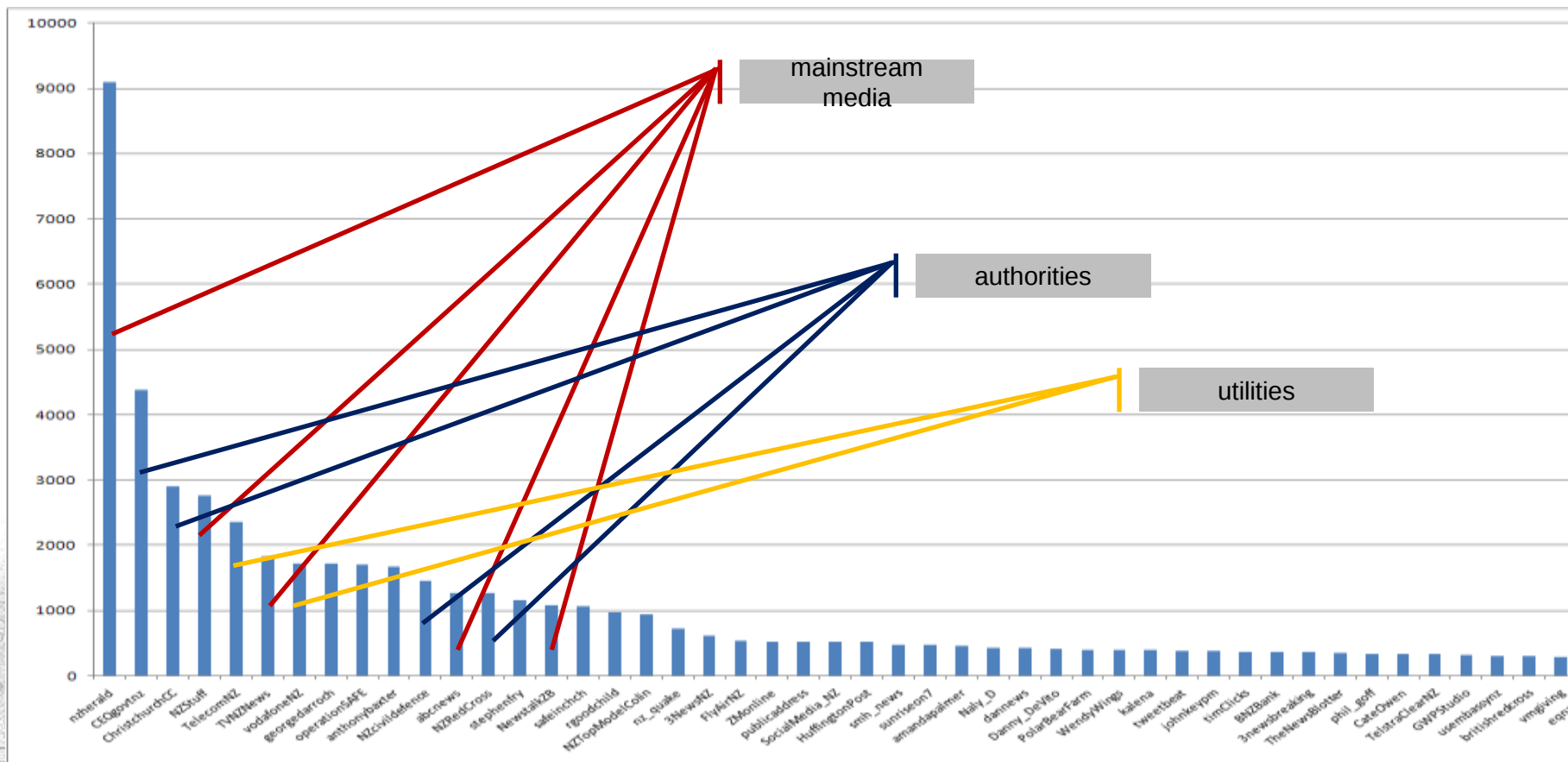
Twitter and the Queensland Floods

- First lessons:
 - #qldfloods as coordinating tool - one central hashtag
 - Go where the users are - and help establish hashtag
 - Plus inventive additions - e.g. @QPSmedia #Mythbuster tweets
 - Most activity by individuals - but key official accounts cut through
 - Enable easy retweeting and sharing of messages
 - Respond and engage
 - Mainstream media are important in social media environments, too
 - *Twitter* as an amplifier of key messages
 - *Twitter* vs. *Facebook* - which works when?

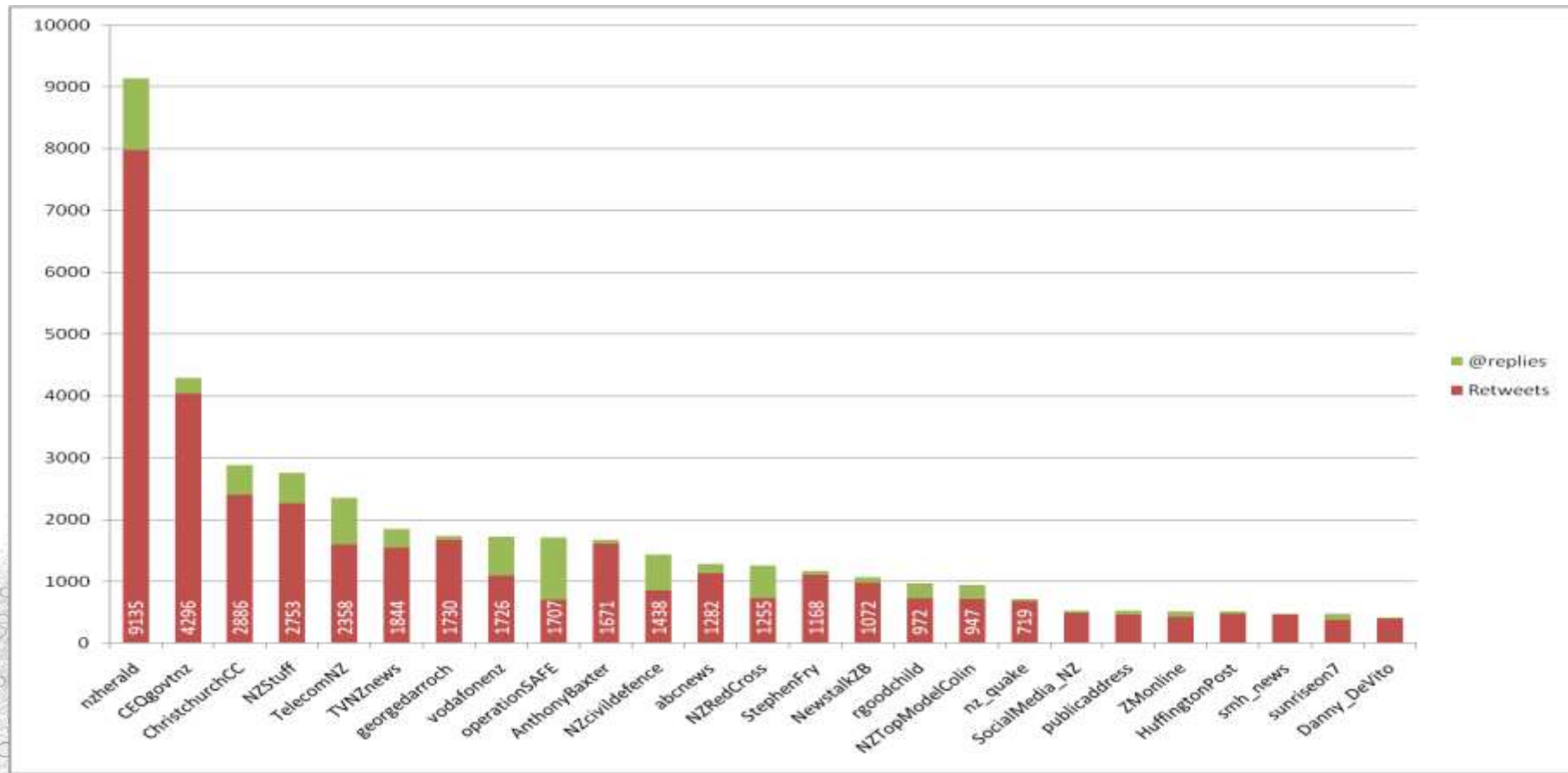
Twitter and the 22 Feb. Christchurch Earthquake: #eqnz



Twitter and the Christchurch Earthquake: #eqnz @replies



Twitter and the Christchurch Earthquake: tweet types



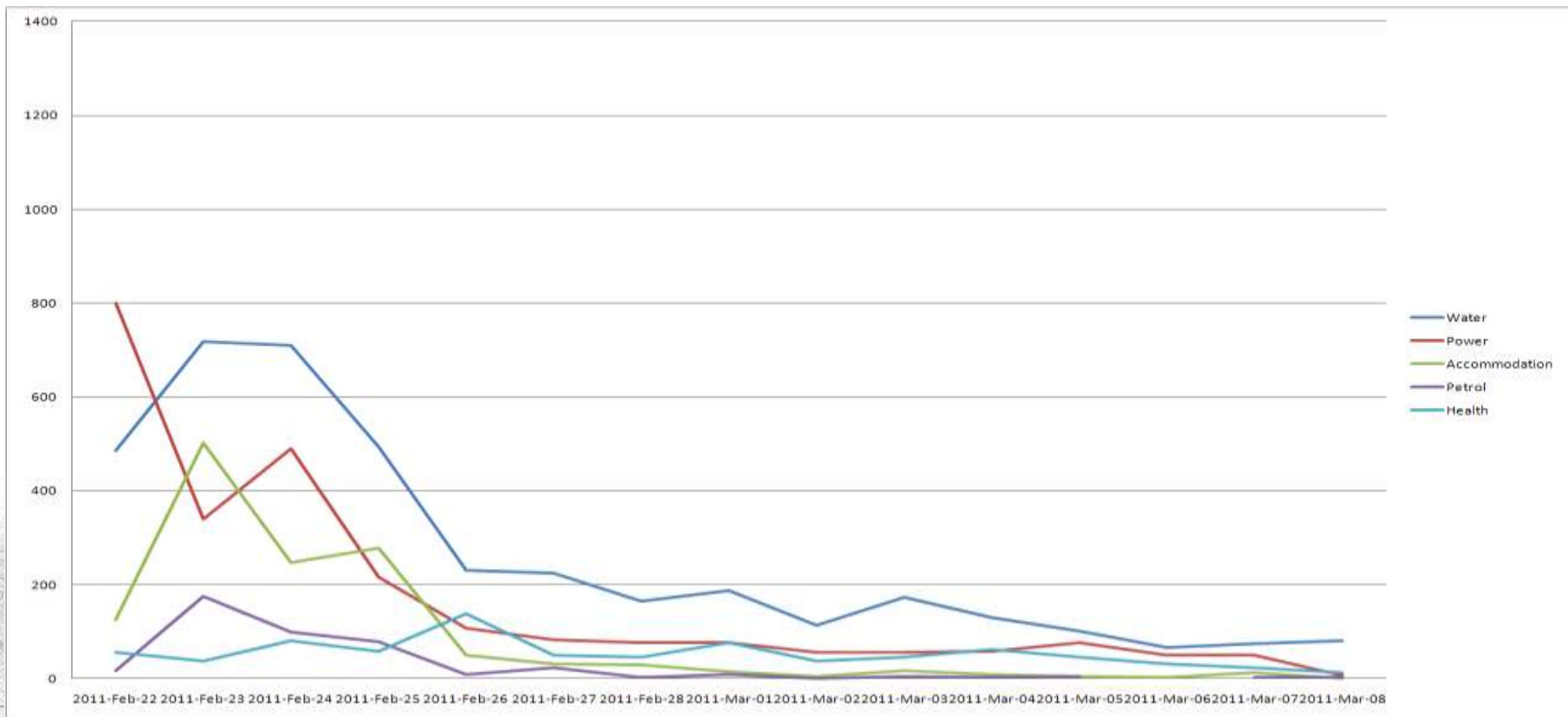
Twitter and the Christchurch Earthquake: #eqnz @replies

- Changing @reply patterns with the move from rescue to recovery:

22-24 Feb 2011		
	Retweets	@replies
nzherald	5748	713
NZStuff	1736	312
AnthonyBaxter	1590	62
TVNZnews	1503	208
georgedarroch	1399	55
TelecomNZ	1289	592
abcnews	1131	127
StephenFry	1094	44
vodafoneNZ	1071	559
CEQgovtnz	689	137
rgoodchild	577	125

25 Feb. - 3 Mar. 2011		
	Retweets	@replies
CEQgovtnz	3349	121
nzherald	2227	447
ChristchurchCC	1830	272
NZcivildefence	561	72
NZStuff	532	173
NewstalkZB	431	43
operationSAFE	399	547
nz_quake	350	22
TelecomNZ	314	163
VMGiving	277	9
NZTopModelColin	271	128

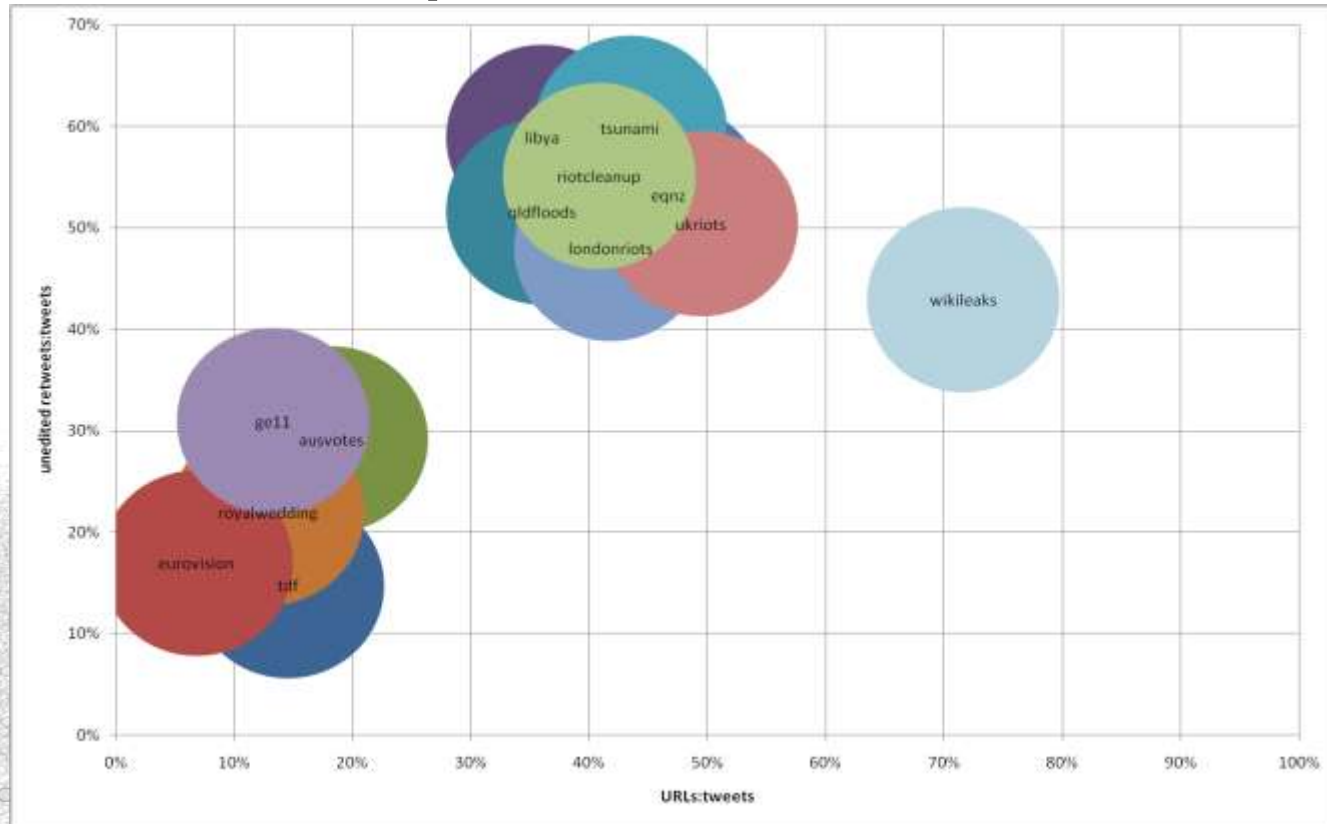
Twitter and the Christchurch Earthquake: #eqnz Themes



Twitter and the Christchurch Earthquake

- Towards better strategies for social media in disasters:
 - February 2011 earthquake building on lessons learnt in September 2010
 - #eqnz and key *Twitter* accounts already established
 - Several key accounts sharing the load and dividing responsibilities
 - More experienced use of *Twitter* by residents and authorities
- Clear shift in attention after the immediate rescue phase:
 - Marked differences in list of most @replied/retweeted accounts
 - Some tracking of current problems / issues / fears may be possible
 - Decline in overall tweet volume / diversification of #hashtags?

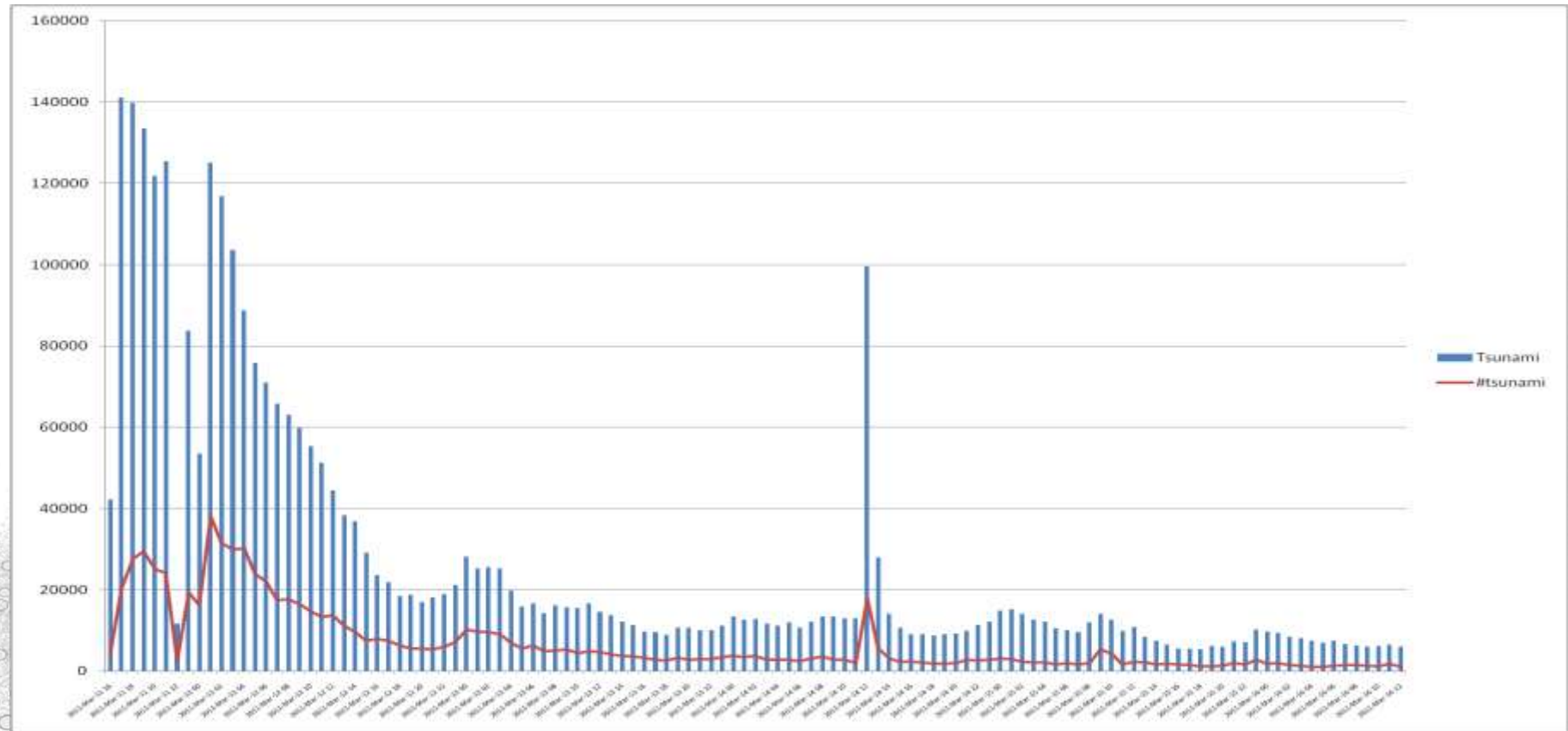
Comparative Metrics



Background: Researching *Twitter*

- #hashtag studies:
 - Selected #hashtags captured from the *Twitter* API using *yourTwapperkeeper*
 - Data processing using custom-made tools - keyword and network analysis
 - Statistic and network visualisations - including dynamic visualisations
 - Broader research:
 - #hashtags are limited - much additional activity outside #hashtags
 - How do #hashtags emerge, how do users encounter and choose them?
 - How much does *Twitter* use during crises differ from everyday usage?
 - Mapping Online Publics:
 - ARC Discovery project, 2010-12: Assoc. Prof. Axel Bruns and Dr. Jean Burgess, QUT
 - Methodology and outcomes: <http://mappingonlinepublics.net/>
 - Further projects on social media and crisis communication under development
- please get in touch!

Twitter and the Japanese Tsunami: Beyond the #Hashtag



Beyond Hashtags

- Publics on *Twitter*:

- Micro: @reply and retweet conversations
- Meso: hashtag 'communities'
- Macro: follower/followee networks

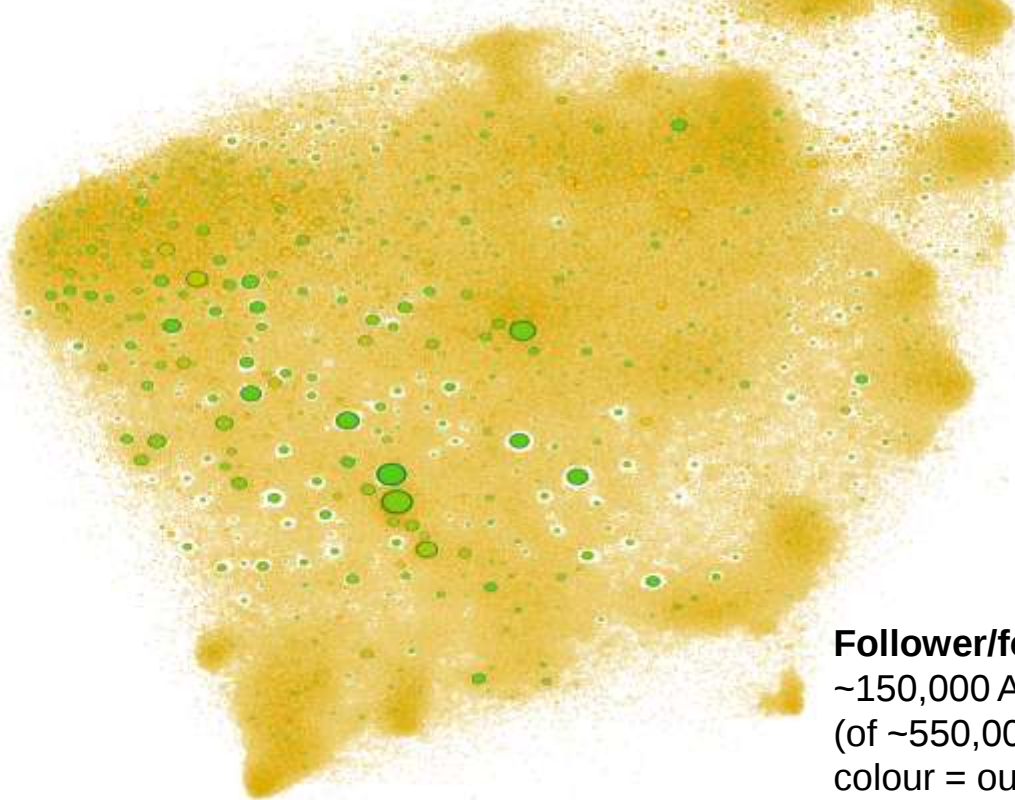
➔ Multiple overlapping publics / networks

- What drives their formation and dissipation?
- How do they interact and interweave?
- How are they interleaved with the wider media ecology?
- *Twitter* doesn't contain publics: publics transcend *Twitter*

Understanding Australian *Twitter* Use

- What is the Australian *Twitter* userbase?
 - Large-scale snowballing project
 - Starting from selected hashtag communities (e.g. #ausvotes, #qldfloods, #masterchef)
 - Identifying participating users, testing for ‘Australianness’:
 - Timezone setting, location information, profile information
 - Retrieving follower/followee information for each account (very slow)
- Progress update:
 - ~550,000 Australian users identified so far

The Australian Twittersphere



Follower/followee network:
~150,000 Australian *Twitter* users
(of ~550,000 known accounts so far)
colour = outdegree, size = indegree

The Australian Twittersphere



<http://mappingonlinepublics.net/>

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