

Assessing Accessibility:

Examining Canadian Academic Library Social Media Communications

Melissa Rivosecchi and Donna Langille, McGill University

Introduction

Our study seeks to find out how academic libraries in Canada communicate to their communities on social media and what considerations libraries make, in regards to accessibility and inclusivity, when they post content online.

Methodology

We collected data from social media posts made by library twitter accounts during the month of September 2018 to determine how many academic libraries are using accessible social media strategies and practices such as alt-text and camel case lettering. Libraries were identified through Maclean's 2019 rankings list (comprehensive and medical/doctoral).

Criteria for Data Collection

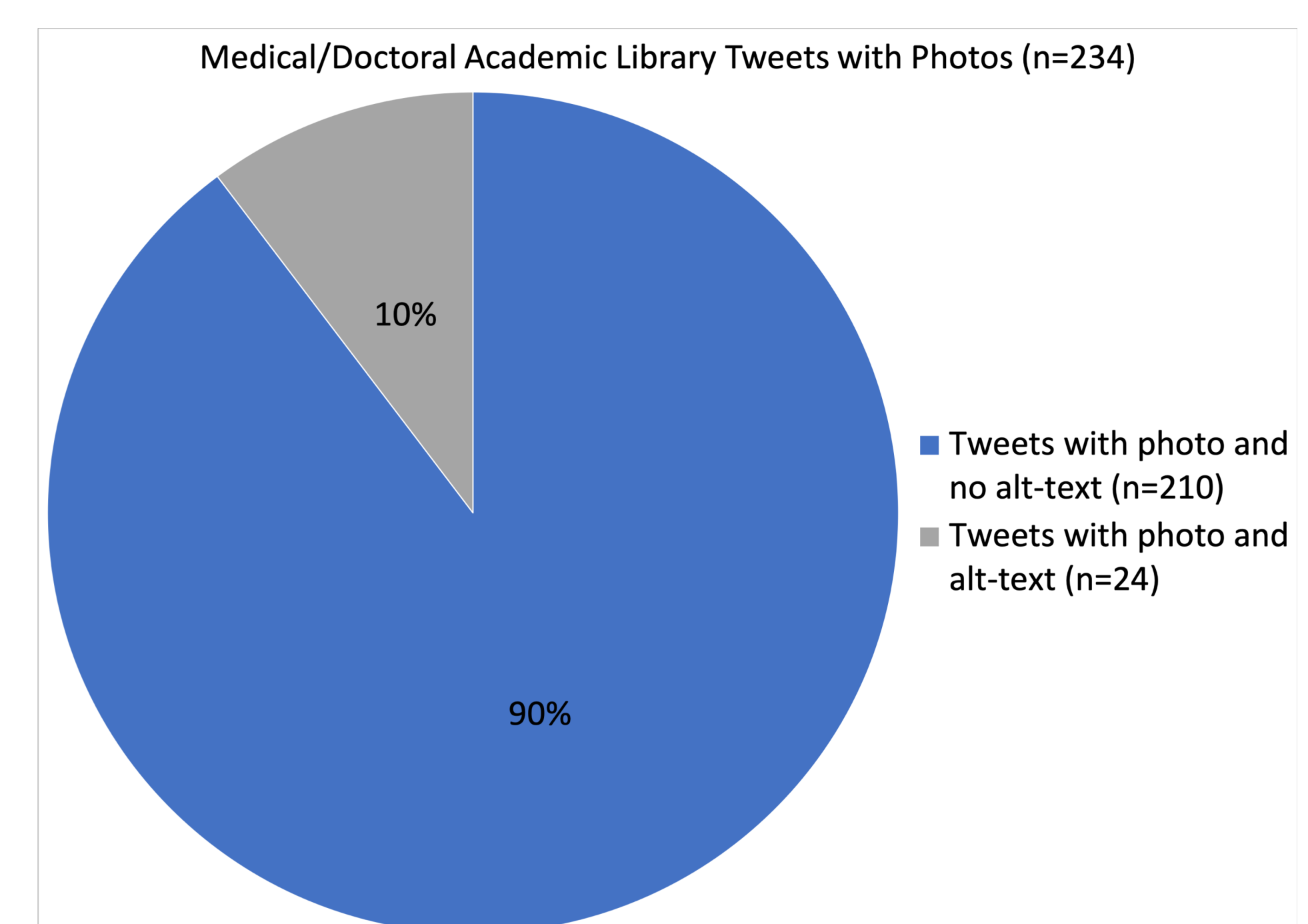
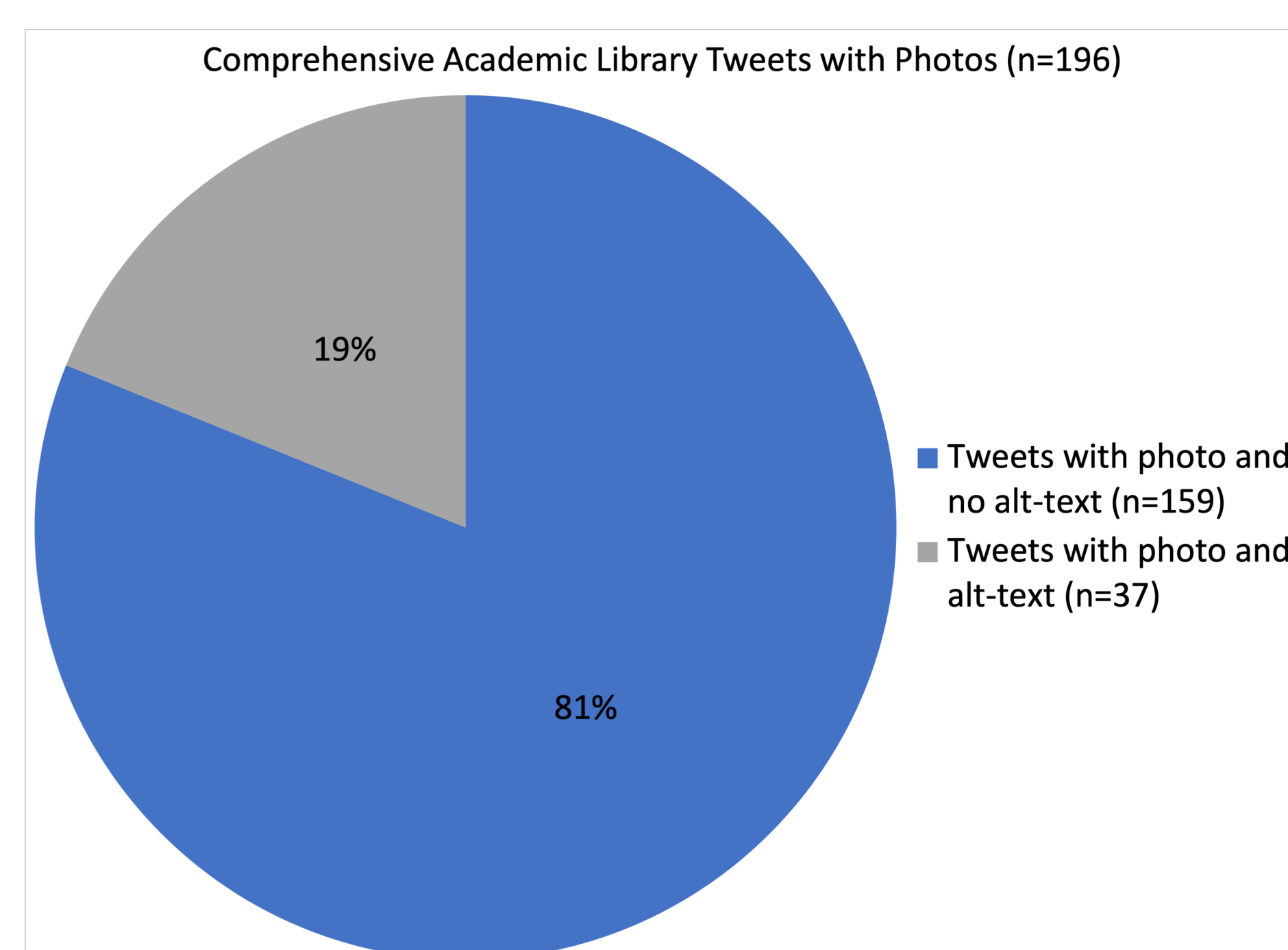
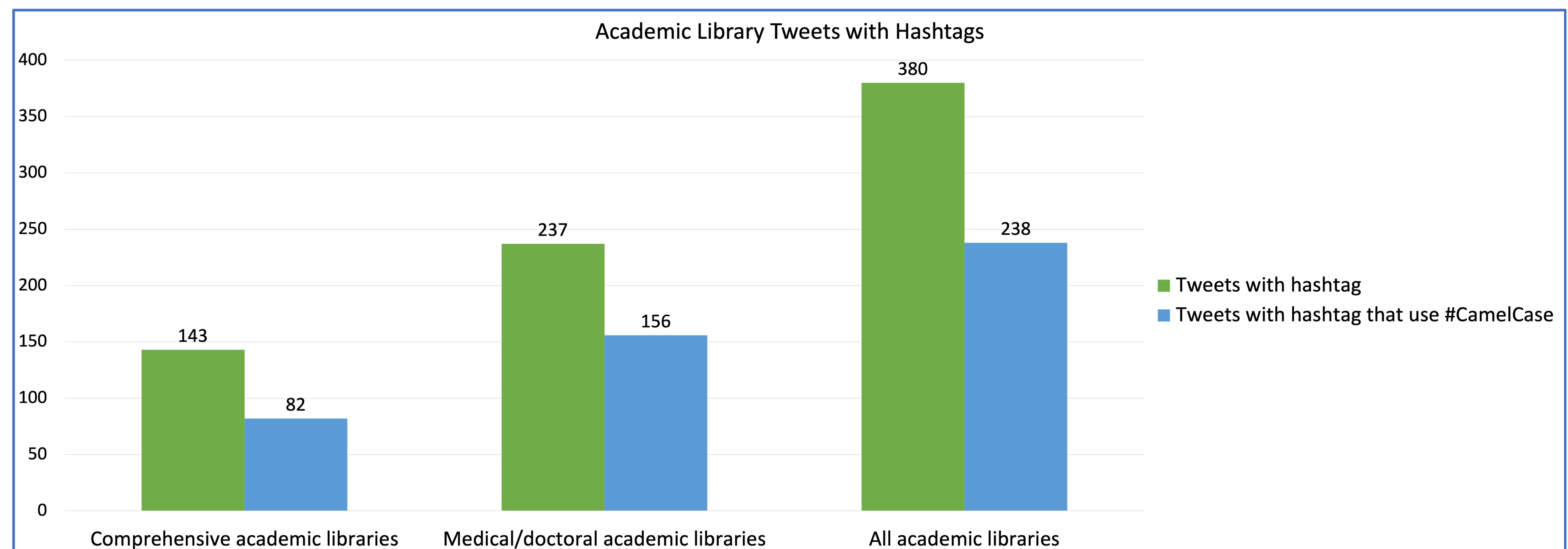
We identified tweets with:

- Photo and alt-text
- Photo and no alt-text
- Text only
- Other media type (GIF, video link, website link, retweet with comment)
- Hashtag (#WithCamelCase and #withoutcamelcase)

Future Opportunities

- Analyze academic library Facebook accounts and the use of AI alt-text.
- Evaluate advantages and disadvantages of social media platforms accessibility options.
- Determine best practices when implementing social media guidelines related to accessible and inclusive communication.

Findings



- **Alt-text** (alternate text) helps people who use screen readers (such as people who are sight impaired) know the content of an image posted online. A description (the content and functionality) of the image is included in the code (Web AIM).
- **Camel Case** is the capitalization of the first word, usually used in a hashtag (e.g. #CamelCase). Using camel case in hashtags is easier to read and makes it easier for screen readers to distinguish individual words (Digital Gov).

Challenges and Limitations

- Manual data collection is prone to errors, especially when identifying text vs. text with other media type.
- We identified extra criteria to include after already beginning data collection which resulted in having to review previous data.
- Alt-text and camel case are not comprehensive of the strategies and best practices for supporting accessibility and inclusivity on social media.

Melissa Rivosecchi is the liaison librarian for Management, Business & Geospatial Data Services at McGill University.

Email: melissa.rivosecchi@mcgill.ca

Twitter: @melisrivo

Email: donna.langille@mail.mcgill.ca

Twitter: @donnaeskye

Donna Langille is an MIST student at the School of Information Studies at McGill University.

References

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