Mini Review

Commetric

Introduction: Company and Products

Commetric is an independent media intelligence company that provides customised analytics based on both traditional and social media sources.

It combines award-winning, patented, natural-language processing and data visualisation technologies with input from expert multilingual analysts to create decision-ready analytical reports. Clients also have access to visualisation tools which they can use directly themselves to dig further into the data.

Commetric also provides managed services for monitoring of social and/or traditional media, as well as media measurement studies.

Its clients are typically large, well-known global brands, or the agencies which work for them, especially in the energy, technology, healthcare and consumer goods sectors.

Buyers and consumers of Commetric's analysis include senior managers in communications or marketing departments, as well as market research and insights units.

Information professionals can contribute by helping to clarify the requirements of the organisation, advising on key content sources to include, overseeing any wider dissemination of monitoring reports and highlighting areas of emerging need, for instance in legal, compliance or human resources departments.

Commetric has sales and service operations in London, Washington DC, Dubai and Singapore, plus an office in Sofia, Bulgaria which performs analytics and R&D.

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Sources, Content and Coverage

Commetric's platform can ingest a wide variety of traditional and social media content, provided that appropriate client subscriptions are in place. It can take in feeds from aggregators such as Factiva, LexisNexis or Moreover; electronic news clippings; and social media sources including blogs, message boards, the full Twitter "firehose", Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and many others.

It also has the capability to crawl sites directly, for instance in order to access subscription-only specialised trade publications (again subject to appropriate client agreements); and it can even ingest scanned hard-copy publications.

Commetric prides itself on its ability to handle multilingual material, with processing and analytical support available for more than 30 content languages.

Technology

Initial Setup - Technical and Editorial
The set-up phase is based on an in-depth conversation with the client to understand their objectives. Commetric analysts then put together a relevant media content set, through a combination of keyword searches and human selection of articles and social media posts.

The vendor will then run the corpus through its proprietary natural language processing technology in order to extract a list of entities such as names of people, companies and locations.

Analysts assign a role to each entity detected, such as journalist, politician, expert/academic, regulator or interest group representative.

Next, entities are mapped to show how they are related to each other within the content set, or how these are linked to specific sub-themes in a conversation.

Commetric then adds a proprietary algorithm to assign an "influence rating" to show the importance and centrality of a person or idea to the discussion - crucially taking account not only of the most "noisy" or prolific commentators, but also of how many people or organisations the influencer is connected to.

Outputs
The output of the Influencer Network Analysis comes in two forms: decision-ready client reports, enriched with plentiful graphical illustrations, and client access to an online platform for further analysis and interaction with the data.

In the reports, the user will find charts showing, for instance, the distribution of influencers on the topic by the role they have in the conversation, covering both individuals and organisations.

Ranking tables are also provided, highlighting individual influencers who might be suitable for outreach activity. The rankings can be organised in various ways, depending on the client's analysis needs.

For instance, mentions relating to influencers can be manually assessed for positive, negative or neutral attitudes, allowing the client to distinguish between endorsers, critics and "swing voters" on the subject in hand.

The service also includes "influencer maps" giving a visual representation of a media conversation.

The service may show which media representatives are connected with which influencers in association with particular topics, as shown below.

Figure 1: Commetric influencer map

The size of a node indicates how central a specific influencer is, and the boldness of a line denotes the strength of the relationship.

The colour coding leverages the manual coding carried out by the Commetric analysts. In this instance, a green box denotes the topic, a red circle identifies a corporate representative, a dark blue circle is a politician, and a light blue circle an interest group representative.

Using the interactive maps, the client can dig further into the data. The example below maps out relationships between organisations and Twitter users in tweets relating to natural gas.
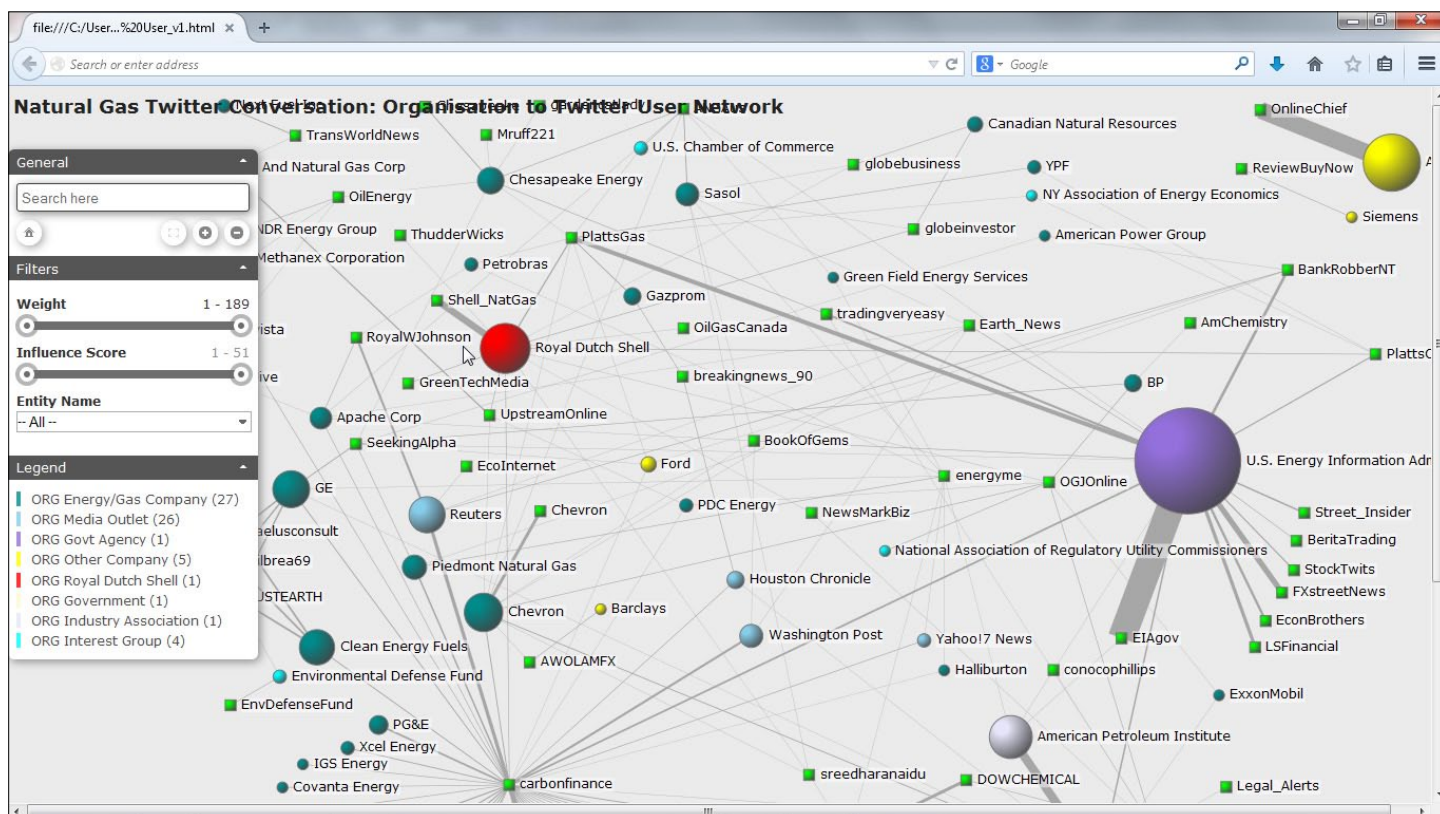
Figure 2: Commetric natural gas map

The thick grey line towards the top left is indicating that "Shell_NatGas" is playing a major part in chatter about the company Royal Dutch Shell. By clicking on the node, the user calls up the underlying tweets, showing how exactly Shell is seeking to shape the conversation about itself.
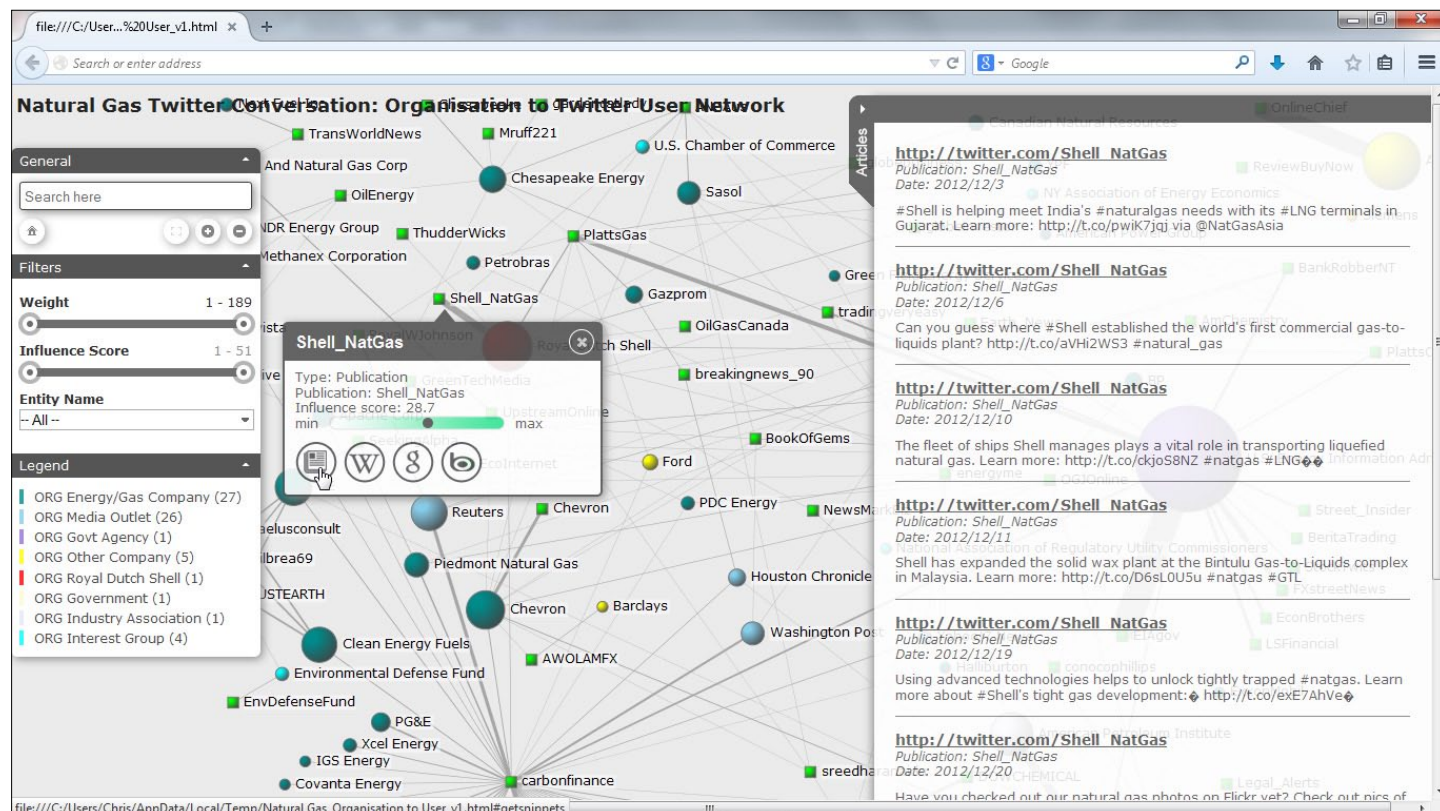

Figure 3: Commetric natural gas tweets

Using the left-hand navigation area, the user can narrow by free text, focus only on the most significant influencers, zoom in on a particular entity or instantly exclude individual entities, or groups of them, from the display.

On first acquaintance some of the functionality, such as the interrelationship between "Entity Name" and "Legend" or "Weight" and "Influence Score", does take a little getting used to; some hover tips might be of assistance here, though things do become clearer after a little experimentation.

Ongoing Monitoring
Commetric says that key-influencer identification is an occasional process, rather than a regularly repeated one.

However, after the initial analysis, clients typically have a requirement to monitor the communications of the key influencers they have identified.

Commetric offers a media monitoring service for this purpose, creating bespoke newsletters in accordance with the needs of the client; or it can provide periodic media analysis reports, often monthly or quarterly; or of course it can re-run its influencer network analysis process, maybe ad hoc to investigate a new geographic region or topic area, or after an interval of a few months, to establish a fresh benchmark.

Alternatively, once the initial influencer identification is done, clients may undertake monitoring themselves using tools such as LexisNexis, Factiva, web-based news aggregators or the wide variety of social media listening tools currently on the market.

Purchasing and Value

The focus of Commetric's Influencer Network Analysis is generally on a topic or theme, rather than on a particular company or predefined group of companies or brands.

The aim is to arrive at highly actionable and structured intelligence, which will enable the client to take specific action to move the debate forward in an efficient way.

Commetric says that in ranking influencers within a specific debate and characterising them by type, its analysis "allows stakeholder outreach programmes to be executed with greater precision and efficiency, targeted to the right people, using the right channels and the right messaging".

Pricing

Commetric says that pricing is customised depending on the scope; as projects typically include human-based qualitative analysis, the main driver is the volume of data reviewed, i.e. the number of tweets, blog posts, articles or other content types.

An initial Influencer Network Analysis study starts at approximately £5,000.

Underlying content costs are subject to separate subscription.

Competition and Alternative Offerings

Many social media vendors have some form of algorithm which purports to identify most "influential" commentators on a topic. However, Commetric observes that these automated approaches often struggle to distinguish sheer volume of production, or volume of potential audience, from actual degree of influence relating

to a conversation on a specific topic - something which it can achieve through its combination of technology and human expertise.

Another approach is that of journalist/blogger databases from companies such as Cision, Vocus (now merged with Cision), PR Newswire, Gorkana, Unicepta, Augure, Datapresse or iSentia.

These typically associate influencers with a pre-defined list of "beats" or topic categories. Commetric says that by contrast, it can explore issues such as *confidence in chemicals*, or *digestive wellness*, which typically do not figure in "beat" lists.

Commetric also says its influencer identification extends well beyond traditional-media reporters and prominent bloggers, to include such key figures as politicians, government officials, corporate spokespeople and academic authorities.

FreePint's View: Value

In FreePint's view, Commetric is an interesting option for organisations wishing to gain a deeper understanding of conversation influencers in a particular topic area. It can be particularly attractive for those grappling with the complexities and quantities of social media coverage.

This kind of analysis requires a combination of expertise, targeted tools and manpower. FreePint can well believe Commetric's assertion that some clients are suffering a degree of "tool fatigue", having tried to undertake such analyses themselves but having found that automated tools still leave them with a great deal of manual wading-through and head-scratching to do.

✓ *Wide range of content options, covering both traditional and social sources*	✓ *Openness to alternative approaches for subsequent monitoring*
✓ *Wide range of languages covered*	✗ *Filtering options in the interactive visual maps can take a little while to get your head around.*
✓ *Intelligent combination of proprietary technology and editorial expertise*	