



Published:

March 2010, page 8

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Mood and food: You are what you tweet?

Everyone knows: You are what you eat, but what does what you eat and tweet say about your mood? Relevation Research, Barrington, Ill., analyzed the connection between individuals' food choices and moods mentioned on Twitter. The firm's analysis studied the presence of approximately 40 different emotional states and 20 comfort or popular foods in tweets across two 30-day periods (spring and fall 2009). Emotions and food/drink mentions were then correlated.



“It’s commonly believed that consumers use food to satisfy many needs and cravings beyond simply hunger or thirst. There are definitely strong correlations between moods tweeted and foods being discussed by the Twitter population, as well as a number of weaker correlations,” said Nan Martin, president and founder of Relevation Research. “Some of them are quite surprising and others can be defined as downright contradictory.”

When chocolate is a hot topic, there is a lot of happy talk going on. This was the strongest correlation uncovered in the research. Surprisingly, ice cream correlates negatively with expressions of feeling lonely, sad or guilty - despite the widely-accepted image of someone alone (usually female) eating a pint of ice cream after a breakup. Instead, soup seems to fit more the ice cream myth, correlating with lonely and alone.

Beer equals crazy, wild, funny or fun times, but also alone and lonely. Beer and stress don’t mix. Pizza is aligned with the identical moods as beer. Coffee is the antithesis of pizza and beer and a bit polarizing, correlating strongly with stress but weakly with feelings of contentment. Similar to coffee, taco tweets correlate with stress but also with calm.

Burgers go hand in hand with fun, but there is also a dark side to them because they correlate with furious and alone as well. Pass the chips if one is miffed because the two link strongly. When love is in the Twitter air, so is sushi. Counter to love, bacon patterns parallel indications of being scared and afraid. BBQ peaks with fun but drops when expressions of excitement or stress are on the rise. When the mood is mad, sandwich chatter is depressed.