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Computational Methods to Social and Public Perceptions: Focus on Digital Governance, Sustainable Development and International Security

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Abstract:
Introduction: In the context of the dynamic digitization of the global space, the analysis of the public's perception becomes paramount for the understanding and relevance of public policies related to sustainable development and security management. In this context, the monitoring and analysis of the trends recorded in the social media space regarding the receptivity of some topics associated with the digital governance field represent valuable clues regarding future institutional policies, but also for citizen initiatives and environmental protection.
Methodology: This study engages a quantitative and qualitative analysis of five selected topics: "digital", "digital governance", "international policies", "sustainable development", "international security". The data was collected on July 8, 2025 with the help of the Social Searcher (https://www.social-searcher.com/) platform in order to collect, analyze and interpret the developments and trends regarding online mentions on social networks during the monitored period. Two sets of keywords were set: the first set associated two keywords ("digital", "digital governance"), the second set associated two keywords ("international policies" and "international security") and the third set associated a keyword ("sustainable development").
Results and discussions: The results certify the increase of interest in the field of the analyzed topics, in the context of the updating of public policies in the field with emphasis on the values in the field of digitalization and with significant variations of the topic "sustainable development". These results reflect the need to consult citizens, but also the need for deepening and an increased interest in developing public policies. At the same time, the results of the analysis demonstrate a direct relationship with current political, social and/or cultural events that influence the public agenda.
Conclusions: The use of media monitoring is a valuable tool for indicating the trends of public reflection of the topics associated with a rule, but also a tool for evaluating public policies.
Keywords: *policies, digital governance, sustainable development, security, media monitoring*

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Introduction

In the last decade, public policies on digital governance have engaged new directions of interaction of institutions and institutional bodies (Holzinger, Weippl, Tjoa, & Kieseberg, 2021; Stewart, 2022), as well as various trends in the way collective and individual feedback on government policies are collected. In this context, the two dimensions of analysis and monitoring of public perception focus on the adoption and implementation of policies and strategies in real time. In this regard, the literature highlights two areas of impact, sustainable development and security, as being primarily associated with digitization processes (Fontanel & Coulomb, 2000). Moreover, several recent studies primarily reflect the potential of sentiment analysis for assessing the impact of public policies for the two, but also for focusing and analyzing the real-time contextual dimensions of the contentious debates on (*i*) security and urban development (Rafiei, Ghaffari & Paknia, 2021); (*ii*) labor market policies and security (Beg, 2022); (*iii*) digital sustainability and transition (Rosário, & Dias, 2022; Sparviero & Ragnedda, 2021); (*iv*) security and climate change (Georgescu, Olimid, Olimid, & Gherghe, 2025); (*v*) security governance and biometric data (Olimid, Georgescu, Olimid, Georgescu, & Gherghe, 2025a); (*vi*) humanitarian assistance and international security (Olimid, Georgescu, Olimid, Georgescu & Gherghe, 2025b).

However, in this perspective, recent studies focus predominantly on quantitative approaches with a multi-category and interdisciplinary character. Thus, there is a need to update the research field of digital governance by extending the analysis to other contextual perspectives associated with online monitoring and semantic analysis in the online space (Li, Larimo & Leonidou, 2023).

The present study aims to develop an analysis on the evolution of trends in the social media space regarding the sentiment associated with the digital field, sustainable development and security. Thus, the two central objectives of the research aim to:

(1) identify the frequency of topics associated with the research field and the thematic distribution according to the specific metrics of the platform used for the analysis;

(2) the analysis of public sentiment and societal receptivity, in order to evaluate the efficiency of institutional communication and perception.

The research is structured on four main sections. The first section developed an introduction to the theme of the field of knowledge and reveals the main directions of analysis in the specialized literature.

The second section focuses on the research methodology and presents the research tools and methods used for online monitoring of the selected topics. The third section centers and analyzes the main results of the research, analyzing and evaluating the public perception and relevance of the data obtained. The last section presents the findings of the research and reflects future research directions.

Methodology

1. The online platform and technological structure used

The present research uses the Social Searcher platform (2025) (https://www.social-searcher.com/) and applied monitoring tools for computational analysis of online mentions and trends in real time as topic extraction and tracking and sentiment analysis:

a) *Monitored period and frequency of online analysis:* The data were extracted and analyzed on July 8, 2025, using only one query per day for each analyzed term;
b) *Language used for the analyzed online content*: English was used for the extraction of data and information;
c) *Digital networks and platforms used for online content analysis:* Facebook, YouTube, Tumblr, Flickr, VK, Twitter (X), forums, blogs, websites, online press articles and studies, public posts, public comments, photo and video platforms.

2. Criteria for identifying and selecting keywords

The analysis centers five keywords as follows "digital", "digital governance", "international policies", "sustainable development", "international security". The selection of keywords is based on a preliminary legal and documentary analysis of the strategies and policies, reports and studies launched in the field of digital governance, sustainable development and international security.

3. Tools used associated with the platform for data collection as follows:

a) for real-time search of online mentions: total mentions (Table 1); total users (Table 1); Sentiment Ratio (Table 1); sentiment analysis - positive/negative/neutral mentions (Table 1);

b) identification of online sources and platforms for online posts and distribution (Table 2);

c) the daily and hourly distribution of the mentions (Table 3 and Table 4);

Graph 1 and Graph 2 visualize the data extracted from Table 1 through charts based on the quantitative analysis.

The limits of the research refer to the fact that only posts, accounts and platforms with a public setting are used for monitoring, not private accounts, which limits the field of knowledge and analysis of the research.

For the contextual interpretation of the monitoring data, the sentiment analysis was performed autonomously and on the same day for all five words, which can have consequences on the frequency distribution depending on the day and time interval of the collected and processed content.

The tools used for monitoring focused on total mentions, total users, sentiment ratio, positive/negative/neutral mentions, the main sources (websites, platforms, forums, etc.), daily and hourly distribution of online mentions.

Moreover, the results of the analysis and the way of public reflection are both related to the publication and launch of important documents at the level of European and international governance such as: (European Commission, 2025a; European Commission, 2025b; United Nations, 2025a; United Nations, 2025b; United Nations General Assembly, 2025; OECD, 2025a; OECDb; OECD, 2025c).

Results and findings

The first part of the analysis reveals the results of the monitoring of the five selected topics and the variations extracted during the monitoring period. It can be observed in Table 1 a peak of 386 total mentions for the topic "digital", 213 mentions for "digital governance", 91 for "international policies", and 281 for "international security".

An increased number of mentions are registered for the topic of "sustainable development" (318 mentions).

This reflects the growing public receptivity to several reports and studies of international and European organizations and institutions in the field at the beginning of July. On the second row of the Table, the results for the selection of total users are highlighted indicating a high volume of users for all five keywords with variations between 62 total users for "international policies" and 233 for the topic "digital" (Table 1).

Table 1. Results of Monitoring Digital Interaction and Sentiment Trends on Selected Topics

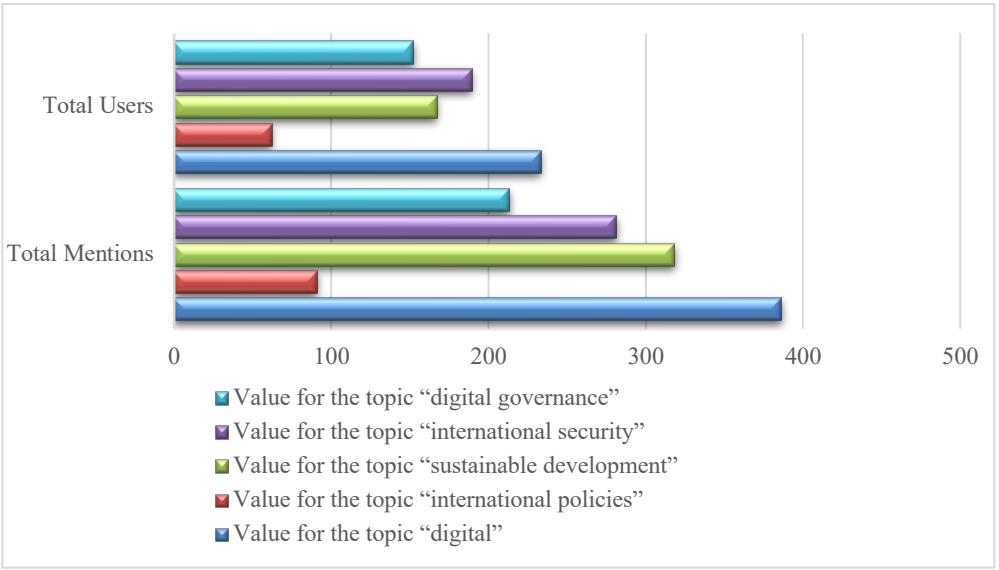
Category	Value for the topic "digital"	Value for the topic "digital governance"	Value for the topic "international policies"	Value for the topic "sustainable development"	Value for the topic "international security"
Total Mentions	386	213	91	318	281
Total Users	233	152	62	167	189
Sentiment Ratio (positive: negative)	4:1	4:1	7:3	9:1	3:2
Positive Mentions	81 (21% of total)	44 (21% of total)	29 (32% of total)	114 (36% of total)	27 (10% of total)
Negative Mentions	16 (4% of total)	9 (4% of total)	11 (12% of total)	8 (3% of total)	20 (7% of total)
Neutral Mentions	289 (75% of total)	160 (75% of total)	51 (56% of total)	196 (61% of total)	234 (83% of total)

Source: Authors' own compilation based on data retrieved on July 8, 2025 from Social Searcher platform available at https://www.social-searcher.com/

The sentiment analysis highlights a positive:negative ratio of [4:1] for the topic "digital", the same ratio of [4:1] for the topic "digital governance", a ratio of [7:3] for the topic "international policies", a ratio of [9:1] for the topic "sustainable development" and a ratio of [3:2] for the topic "international security" (Table 1).

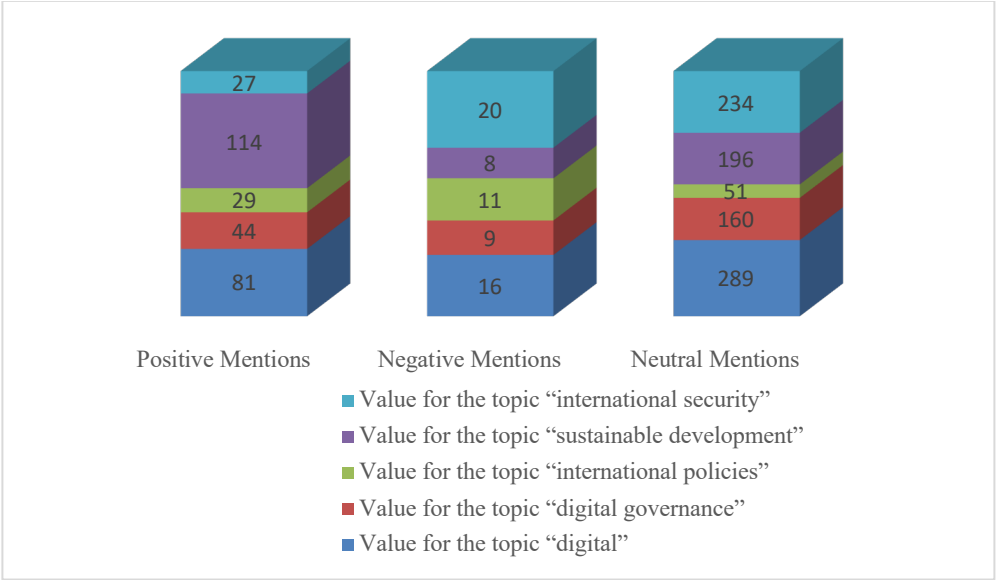
These reports reflect a predominantly positive receptivity of the five keywords during the monitored period (Table 1, Graph 1 and Graph 2). The graphic distribution of the results obtained as a result of the online monitoring reveals a predominance of the content generated for the topics "digital", "sustainable development" and "sustainable development" (Graph 1).

Graph 1. Volume of Online Mentions and Digital Visibility



Source: Authors' own compilation based on data retrieved on July 8, 2025 from Social Searcher platform available at https://www.social-searcher.com/

Graph 2. Online Distribution of Mentions based on Sentiment Polarity



Source: Authors' own compilation based on data retrieved on July 8, 2025 from Social Searcher platform available at https://www.social-searcher.com/

Table 2 identifies the platforms and web sources (Columns 2-6) where mentions of the five selected keywords appear most frequently. The sites presented in Table 2 will be presented chromatically differentiated according to their typology as follows:

(a) official governmental, organisational and institutional sources (light blue backgrounds);

(b) websites of academic institutions, scientific databases and academic journals (light orange);

(c) websites of newspapers and information websites of a general nature or specialised on the field of politics (light yellow);

(d) social media networks, online forums, social forums, video platforms, photo galleries (light green);

(e) online educational sources and platforms (light grey);

(f) platforms and services with commercial support, forms of insurance and digital banks, online shops (dark blue);

(g) websites of non-governmental organizations (dark orange);

(h) blogs and civil society initiatives (dark green).

During the period selected for the extraction and processing of data and information, it is observed that social platforms (reddit.com) and online collaborative encyclopedias (en.wikipedia.org) register increased values of occurrence frequencies, as well as polarized reactions for topics "digital governance" (86 mentions), "sustainable development" (2 mentions) and "international security" (2 mentions).

Also, the data and results in Table 2 highlight high frequencies of occurrences of the selected words on:

(a) the websites of the institutions as follows: unctad.org (22 mentions) for topic "sustainable development"; nsf.gov (1 mention) for topic "international policies"; sdgs.un.org (2 mentions) for topic "sustainable development"; international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu (1 mention) for topic "international policies"; state.gov (2 mentions) or topic "international security"; ustr.gov (1 mentions) for topic "international policies";

(b) websites of academic institutions, scientific databases and academic journals. In this category, the most frequent occurrences are recorded for the topic "international security" (Column 6) as follows: direct.mit.edu (2 mentions); muse.jhu.edu (2 mentions); schar.gmu.edu (2 mentions) and jstor.org (1 mention);

(c) websites of newspapers and information websites of a general nature or specialised on the field of politics as follows: for topic "international policies": thehill.com (4 mentions); for topic "sustainable development": mercurynews.com (4 mentions); newsroom.gy (3 mentions) and haaretz.com (2 mentions);

(d) social media networks, online forums, social forums, video platforms, photo galleries as follows: for topic "digital governance": flickr.com (100 mentions); reddit.com (86); m.vk.com (3) and for for topic "digital": m.vk.com (12); youtube.com (4) and preview.redd.it (3);

(e) online educational sources and platforms as follows: for topic "digital": freewebcart.com (6 mentions); support.n26.com (2 mentions) and ahrefs.com (2 mentions) and for topic "international policies": instaforex.com (4 mentions) and aetnainternational.com (1 mention)

(g) websites of non-governmental organizations as follows: for topic "international policies" littleleague.org (1 mention);

(h) blogs and civil society initiatives as follows: for topic "digital" wuestenigel.com (6 mentions) and weskill.org (2 mentions); topic "digital governance": hackernoon.com (3 mentions).

Table 2. Key Online Domains for Engagement on Selected Topics

No.	Domain and total mentions for topic "digital"	Domain and total mentions for topic "digital governance"	Domain and total mentions for topic "international policies"	Domain and total mentions for topic "sustainable development"	Domain and total mentions for topic "international security"
1.	forum-wodociagi.pl (15)	flickr.com (100)	thehill.com (4)	unctad.org (22)	bit.ly (3)
2.	m.vk.com (12)	reddit.com (86)	instaforex.com (4)	mercurynews.com (4)	direct.mit.edu (2)
3.	tmt.ph (7)	vk.com (44)	littleleague.org (1)	newsroom.gy (3)	en.wikipedia.org (2)
4.	freewebcart.com (6)	i.redd.it (10)	nsf.gov (1)	sdgs.un.org (2)	muse.jhu.edu (2)
5.	wuestenigel.com (6)	hackernoon.com (3)	international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu (1)	en.wikipedia.org (2)	state.gov (2)
6.	youtube.com (4)	m.vk.com (3)	ustr.gov (1)	iisd.org (2)	schar.gmu.edu (2)
7.	preview.redd.it (3)	digital.gov (2)	aetnainternational.com (1)	onlinelibrary.wiley.com (2)	jamesmdorsey.substack.com (2)
8.	support.n26.com (2)	undp.gov (2)	ohchr.org (1)	globalgoals.org (2)	haaretz.com (2)
9.	weskill.org (2)	opengovpartnership.org (2)	hks.harvard.edu (1)	dashboards.sdgindex.org (2)	preview.redd.it (2)
10.	ahrefs.com (2)	sciencedirect.com (2)	unesco.org (1)	unwomen.org (2)	jstor.org (1)

Source: Authors' own compilation based on data retrieved on July 8, 2025 from Social Searcher platform available at https://www.social-searcher.com/

Table 3 presents the percentage distribution of occurrences by days of the week. According to the results shown in Table 3, the peaks of online activity are recorded on Tuesday and Wednesday of the week related to the monitoring.

Therefore, Tuesday and Wednesday (in the middle of the week) are the two days in which there is an increased activity and frequency of use of the five topics.

According to the data in Table 3, a sharp increase is observed on Wednesday for the "digital" (90%), the topic "international policies" (60%), the topic "sustainable development" (52%) and the topic "international security" (68%). Between Thursday and Sunday for the topics selected for analysis, Table 3 shows low values and informal mentions.

Table 3. Weekday Distribution of User Online Posting Behavior

Day	Percentage for the topic "digital"	Percentage for the topic "digital governance"	Percentage for the topic "international policies"	Percentage for the topic "sustainable development"	Percentage for the topic "international security"
Monday	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%
Tuesday	10%	26%	37%	42%	5%
Wednesday	90%	59%	60%	52%	68%
Thursday	0%	4%	1%	2%	3%
Friday	0%	5%	1%	2%	9%
Saturday	0%	5%	0%	0%	12%
Sunday	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%

Source: Authors' own compilation based on data retrieved on July 8, 2025 from Social Searcher platform available at https://www.social-searcher.com/

Table 4 presents the percentage distribution of occurrences on the time intervals of the day in which the monitoring and extraction of data for analysis took place. As the results extracted in Table 4 are presented, it is observed that the poorest time intervals are 00:00-10.00 and 14:00-24.00 for the topic "digital"; 02:00-10.00 for the topic "digital governance"; 20:00-24:00 for the topic "international policies"; 18:00-22:00 for the topic "sustainable development" and 00:00-14.00 for the topic "international security".

Table 4. Hourly Distribution of User Online Posting Behavior

Day	Percentage for the topic "digital"	Percentage for the topic "digital governance"	Percentage for the topic "international policies"	Percentage for the topic "sustainable development"	Percentage for the topic "international security"
00:00-02:00	1%	9%	4%	18%	2%
02:00-04:00	1%	2%	3%	8%	1%
04:00-06:00	1%	1%	2%	11%	2%
06:00-08:00	4%	4%	4%	7%	3%
08:00-10:00	7%	5%	36%	2%	9%
10:00-12:00	82%	10%	5%	19%	3%
12:00-14:00	2%	5%	12%	0%	9%
14:00-16:00	1%	15%	14%	1%	11%
16:00-18:00	1%	15%	8%	10%	7%
18:00-20:00	0%	31%	10%	7%	40%
20:00-22:00	0%	2%	0%	4%	2%
22:00-24:00	0%	1%	0%	13%	10%

Source: Authors' own compilation based on data retrieved on July 8, 2025 from Social Searcher platform available at https://www.social-searcher.com/

Table 5 and Table 6 show the Pearson correlation coefficients (**r**), coefficients of determination ($\mathbf{R^2}$) and associated **p**-values for the five keywords selected for monitoring for both weekly distribution (Table 5) and hourly distribution (Table 5) analyses. The values recorded in both tables suggest days and periods of time in which one, two or more topics were discussed, debated and received in the public space, which leads to certain stronger or moderate correlations between two or more keywords and other contextual associations.

For a general interpretation of the data in the two tables, we estimate the following values of r (Pearson) (expresses the linear relationship between two variables in the tables) as follows: $r > 0.9$ = very strong correlation; $0.7 < r \leq 0.9$ = strong correlation; $0.5 < r \leq 9$ = moderate correlation, $r \approx 0$ = no correlation. For R^2 (expresses the proportion of the variation of one variable explained by another variable).

Thus, for Table 5, the following strongest correlations between topics are recorded: (*i*) "digital" - "digital governance" ($r = 0.9519$; $R^2 = 0.9061$; $p < 0.001$) which expresses a very strong and extremely significant correlation between the two topics and 90.6% of the variation is explained; (*ii*) "digital" - "international policies" ($r = 0.8858$; $R^2 = 0.7846$; $p < 0.01$) which expresses a strong correlation of the two terms compared, significant and 78.46% variation explained; (*iii*) "digital" - "sustainable development" ($r = 0.8075$; $R^2 = 0.652$; $p < 0.05$) which expresses a strong, significant correlation, 65% explanation; (*iv*) "digital" - "international security" ($r = 0.9796$; $R^2 = 0.9597$; $p < 0.001$) which expresses one of the strongest correlation recorded in Table 6, significant; (*v*) "digital governance" - "international policies" ($r = 0.9801$; $R^2 = 0.9607$; $p < 0.001$) which expresses the strongest and closest relationship expressed in Table 6, almost perfect.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Matrix – Weekly Distribution

	"digital"	"digital governance"	"international policies"	"sustainable development"	"international security"
"digital"	r = 1	r = 0.9519 $R^2 = 0.9061$ p < 0.001	r = 0.8858 $R^2 = 0.7846$ p < 0.01	r = 0.8075 $R^2 = 0.652$ p < 0.05	r = 0.9796 $R^2 = 0.9597$ p < 0.001
"digital governance"		r = 1	r = 0.9801 $R^2 = 0.9607$ p < 0.001	r = 0.9424 $R^2 = 0.888$ p < 0.01	r = 0.9105 $R^2 = 0.829$ p < 0.01
"international policies"			r = 1	r = 0.9889 $R^2 = 0.9779$ p < 0.001	r = 0.8145 $R^2 = 0.6634$ p < 0.05
"sustainable development"				r = 1	r = 0.7227 $R^2 = 0.5222$ p = 0.0666
"international security"					r = 1

For Table 6, the strongest correlations are recorded as follows: (*i*) "digital governance" - "international security" ($r = 0.8364$; $R^2 = 0.6995$; $p < 0.001$) which expresses a very strong correlation between the two terms and significant si (*ii*) "digital"

- "sustainable development" ($r = 0.5119$; $R^2 = 0.262$; $p = 0.0889$) which reflects a moderate, insignificant correlation at the limit. Other correlations such as "international policies" - "sustainable development" $r = -0.504$; $R^2 = 0.254$; $p = 0.0948$ reflects a moderate, negative correlation.

Table 6. Pearson Correlation Matrix – Hourly Distribution

	"digital"	"digital governance"	"international policies"	"sustainable development"	"international security"
"digital"	r = 1	r = 0.0402 $R^2 = 0.0016$ p = 0.9013	r = -0.0331 $R^2 = 0.0011$ p = 0.9186	r = 0.5119 $R^2 = 0.262$ p = 0.0889	r = -0.1698 $R^2 = 0.0288$ p = 0.5977
digital governance		r = 1	r = 0.1834 $R^2 = 0.0337$ p = 0.5682	r = -0.0224 $R^2 = 0.0005$ p = 0.9449	r = 0.8364 $R^2 = 0.6995$ p < 0.001
international policies			r = 1	r = -0.504 $R^2 = 0.254$ p = 0.0948	r = 0.2386 $R^2 = 0.0569$ p = 0.4551
"sustainable development"				r = 1	r = -0.2254 $R^2 = 0.0508$ p = 0.4811
"international security"					r = 1

Conclusions

The conclusions of the digital monitoring analysis of the selected topics reveal first that the distribution of the frequency of occurrence of mentions was concentrated on weekdays (especially Tuesdays and Wednesdays). In this context, the weekend days and the beginning of the week recorded low frequencies of the appearance of the five tops. The first day and the last day of the week (Monday and Sunday) recorded the lowest values. Secondly, the distribution by hourly intervals showed that the morning interval of each day of the week (08:00-12.00) presents the highest values.

This perspective is explained by the daily peak of the morning work schedule. There are also time slots (18:00-20:00) for the topic "international security" in which there are increased values (40%), which demonstrates the involvement and public perception more focused outside working hours.

The conclusions regarding the sentiment analysis reflect a double approach on the majority of neutral mentions with values between 51 mentions and 289 mentions which demonstrate an objective, informative and analytical approach on the field of knowledge reflected by the topics selected for analysis and monitoring.

In this respect, the data reflected by the six tables and two graphs demonstrate that public publications should be concentrated for an online distribution related to working days (Tuesday and Wednesday), requiring an in-depth analysis of the public distribution for weekends and early weekdays. A second recommendation reflects the deepening of the analysis of positive posts and time fluctuations around dominant topics for the field of knowledge of digital governance, sustainable development and international security.

Authors' Contributions:
The authors contributed equally to this work.

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