

# Wright State lab works to mine social media posts

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Wright State professor Amit Sheth heads Cognovi Labs, a new information technology company.

A new analytic tool developed at a Wright State University lab is designed to convert statements made on social media into actionable information.

Cognovi Labs developed the tool, called Twitris. The lab, backed by Ikove Venture Partners, is a “start-up nursery” focusing on high-potential concept technologies currently in development at leading universities and creating ideal situations for those companies to grow.



Ikove is based in Columbus and has an office in Dayton.

Twitris was first envisioned by Wright State professor Amit Sheth, whose research in human centric intelligence computing has led to two successful companies.

“Initially the idea came to me when terrorists struck Mumbai in 2008,” Sheth said. “I saw how the breaking news was carried out on social media before traditional media such as TV.”

A real-world example of the tool’s capability came during the Brexit vote in June. The research team analyzed Twitter chatter leading up to the vote. Initial polls were leaning toward staying, however the tool successfully predicted that the polls were wrong six hours before it was confirmed by media reports.

This was done through unique semantic technology that sets it apart from traditional social media monitoring and analysis tools, Sheth said. Sentimental analysis is also known as opinion mining (analysis of opinions, attitudes and emotions).

“The technology is now at or near commercial grade,” Sheth said.

The technology is deployed on a large computing cloud at Wright State, where non-researchers are able to effectively use the tool.

Suggested applications include disaster coordination, brand tracking, law enforcement, enterprise risk management, public policy, public health and elections.

James Mainord is the CEO of Cognovi Labs and has worked with Ikove since last fall. He first experienced the power of the Twitris tool and while scouting new technologies in the Dayton area.

“Dr. Sheth knows this world so well in his understanding of the semantic web and machine learning technologies,” Mainord said.

The next step is bringing the product to market, said Mainord.

The team has already begun analyzing political discussions about this year’s presidential election.

“We’re looking forward to the debate at Wright State, we’re going to be very active on that front,” said Ikove co-founder Flavio Lobato.

Commercial brands are another avenue the owners believe will benefit from Twitris.

“It’s a very powerful tool for companies looking to understand and get feedback on product launches and marketing in general,” Lobato said.