



Public Attitudes to Science 2014: Social Listening

October – December 2013 report

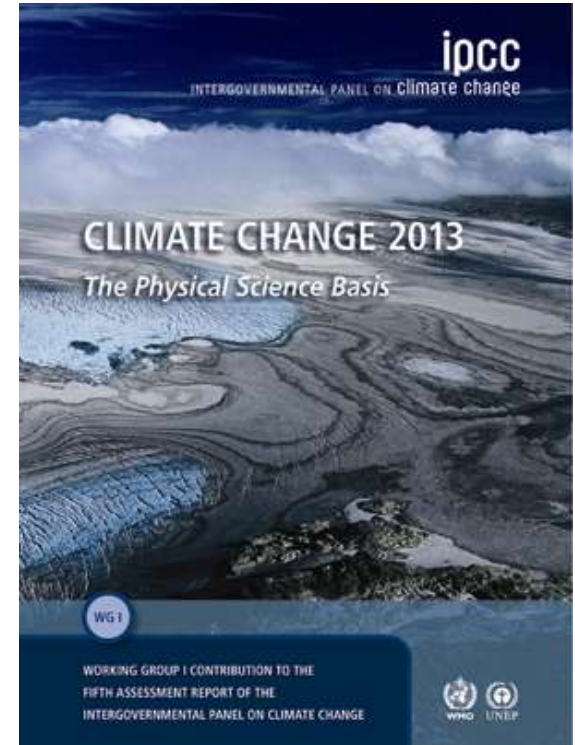
PUBLIC

Objectives

Ipsos MORI are conducting a year long research exercise into how people talk about science. Using our social media tracking programme we are able to see who is talking about science online, what they are talking about, and when. In essence – **what makes science ‘sticky’?**

September – December (Q4) objectives:

- To continue to examine the mechanics by which particular stories spread over social networks
- Search subjects – **animal testing** and **climate change**



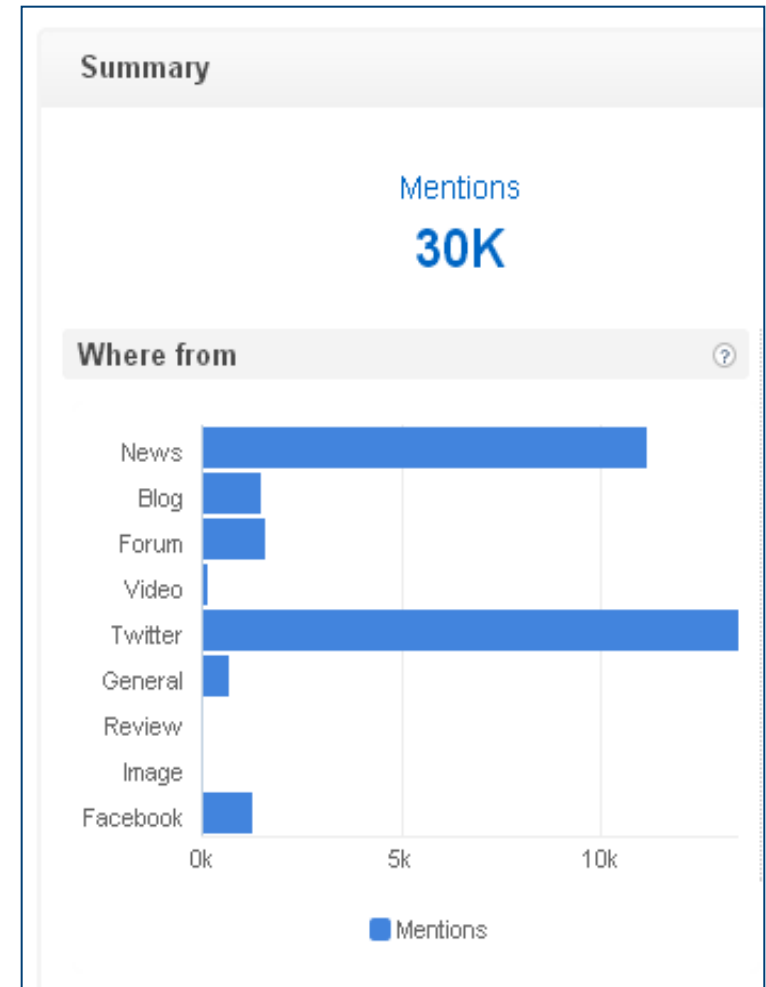
Method

Using our in-house social media platform we are able to measure internet traffic volumes on different subjects across a range of online sources, including Twitter, forums, blogs, news sites, etc.

Over this period we searched for mentions relating to the release of the IPCC 5th report on climate change and animal research

Our search terms:

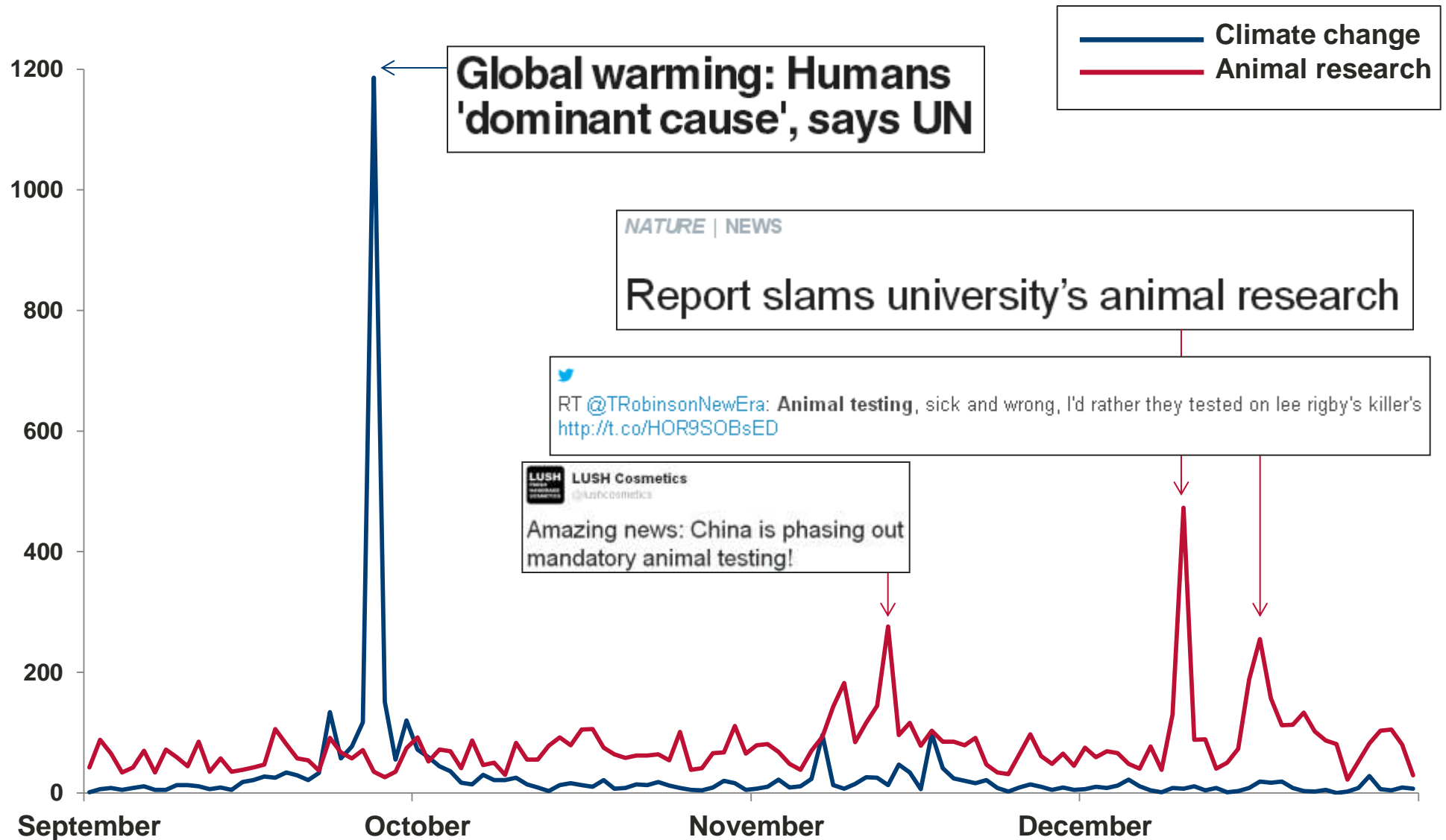
- (("Climate change" OR "Global warming") NEAR/10 (scien* OR expert* OR tests)) AND ("IPCC" OR "International Panel on Climate Change" OR "fifth")
- "animal test" OR "animal testing" OR "animal research" OR "research on animals" OR "tests on animals*" OR "testing on animals"



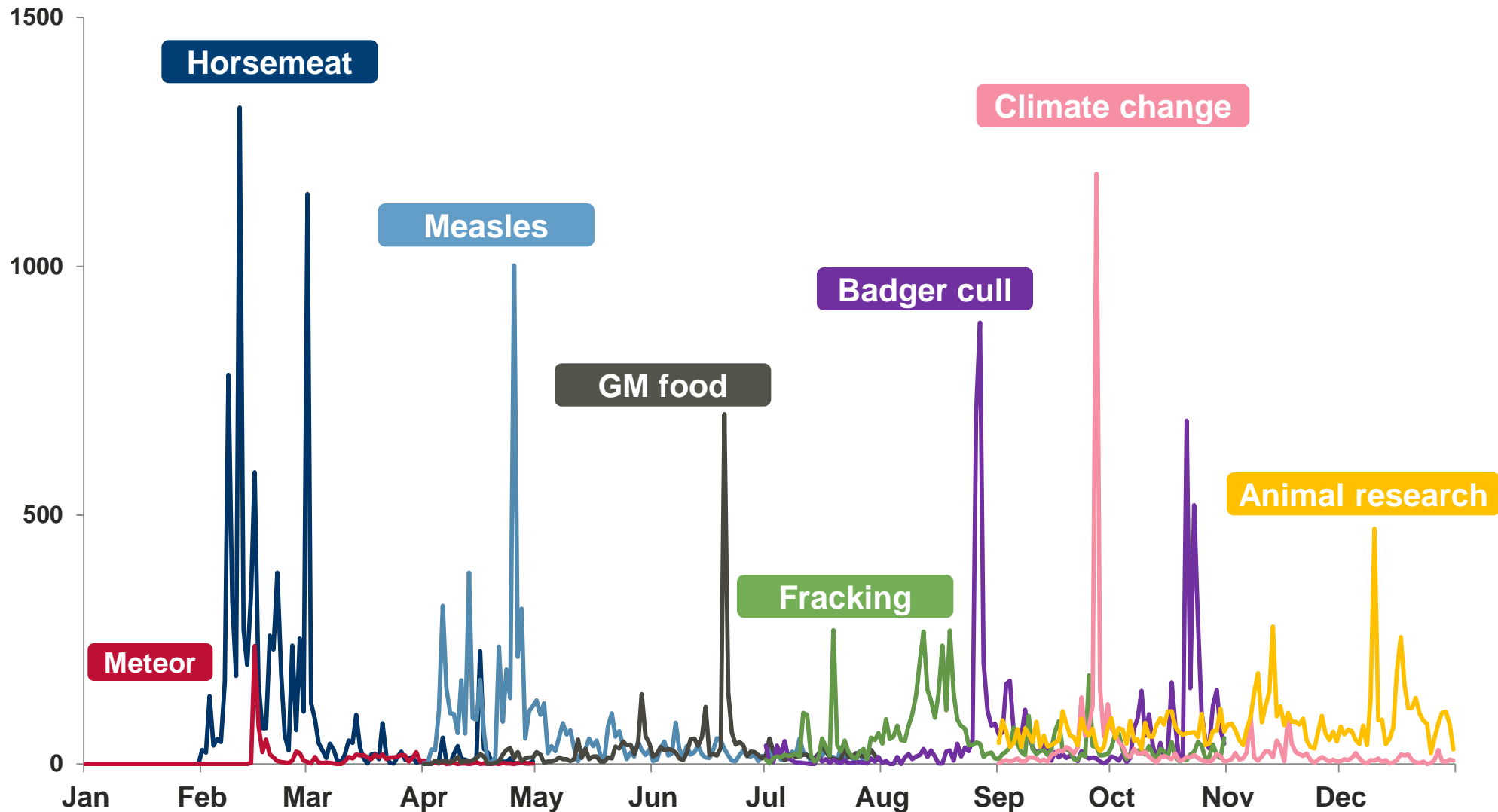
Headline findings



Climate change and animal research – UK internet traffic

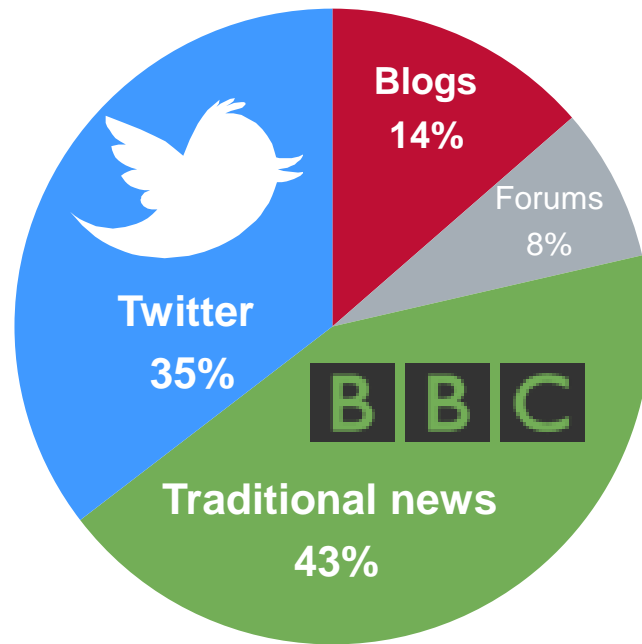


Of the science stories examined over the year, the horsemeat story provoked the most conversations...

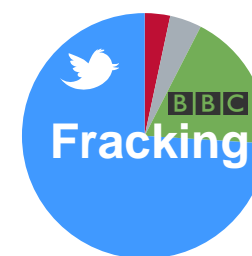
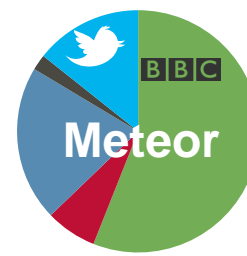
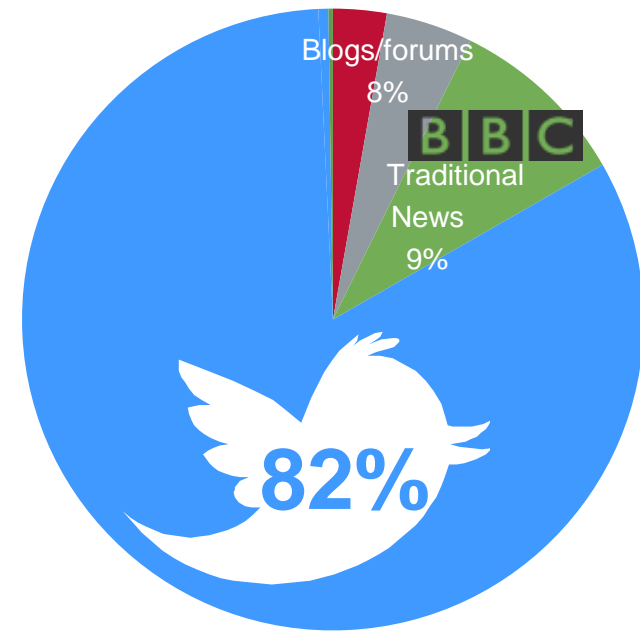


The climate change story had a stronger news element than animal testing

Climate change



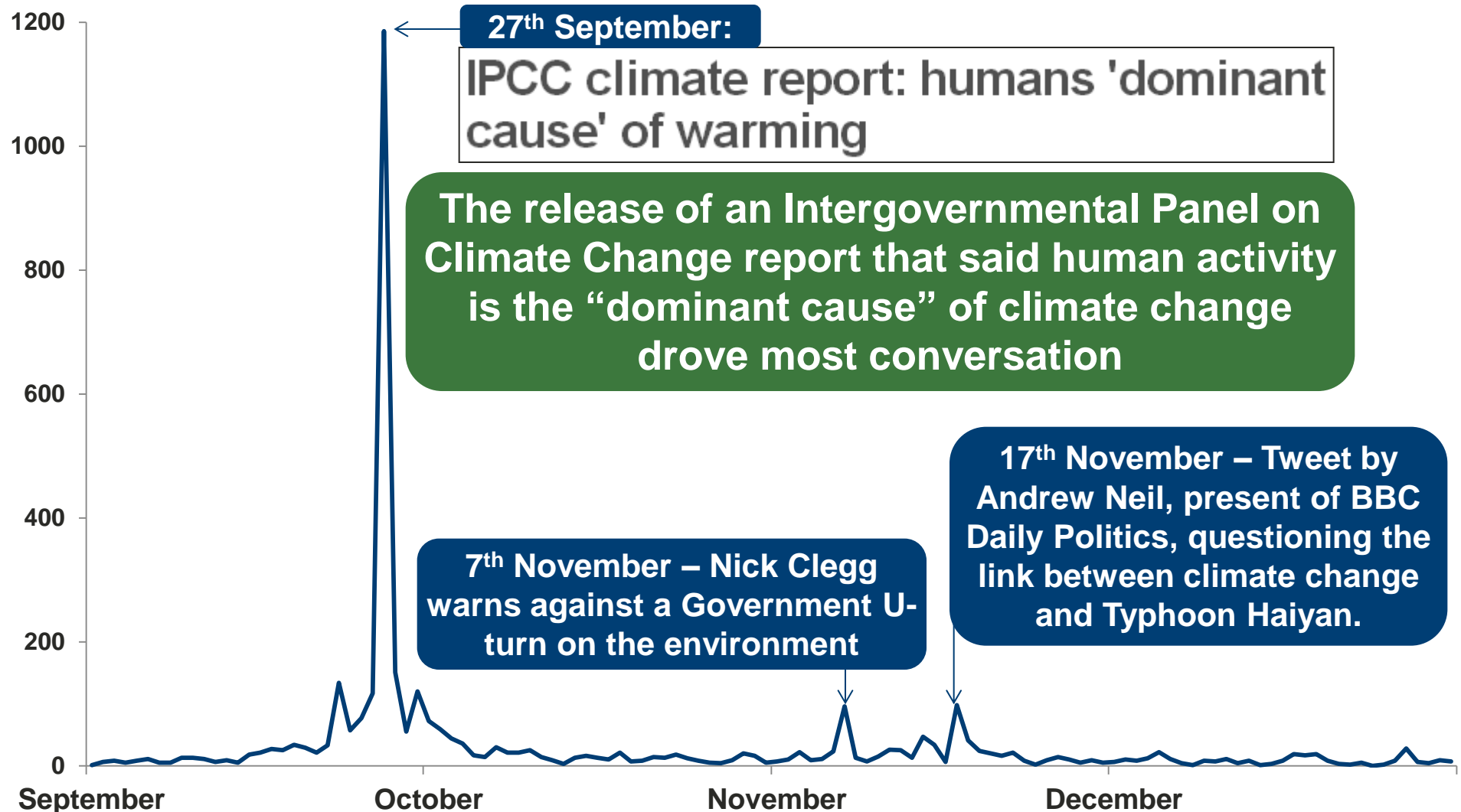
Animal testing



Climate change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)



Climate change: one peak in conversation





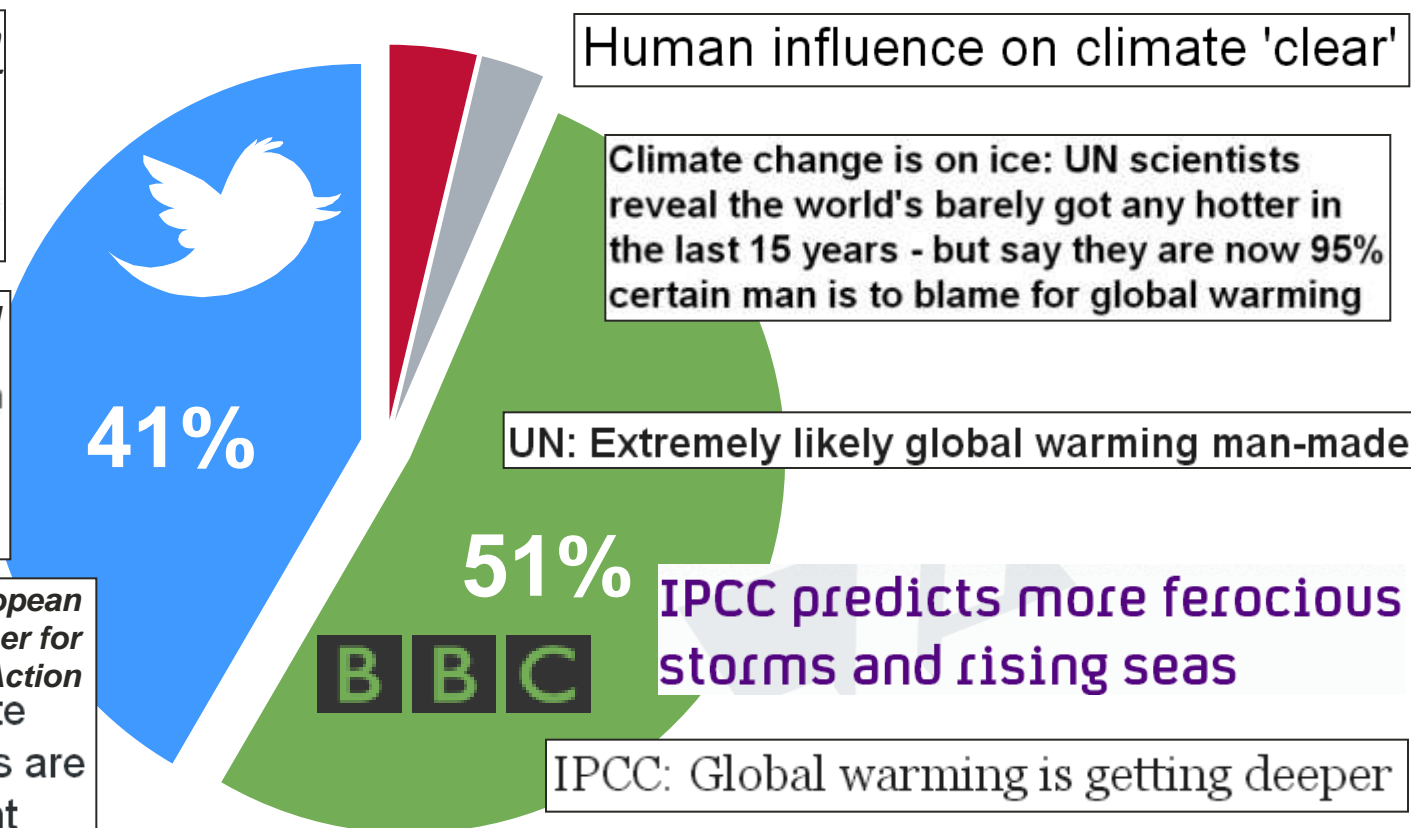
27th September – the IPCC report release date

More Twitter traffic, but still predominantly news reporting

 **The Guardian** 
@guardian
The Guardian Newspaper
IPCC #climatechange report: a scientist's story of approving the most important climate change report ever written t.gu.com/pgyQ6

 **BMJ** 
@bmj_latest
British Medical Journal
Scientists say they are 95% certain that humanity is responsible for climate change @IPCC_CH bmj.com/content/347/bm...

 **Connie Hedegaard** 
@CHedegaardEU
European Commissioner for Climate Action
It's the science, stupid! Climate change is happening, humans are causing it, and action is urgent #IPCC



Many Tweets simply noted the report release

Scientific debate in forums – who is talking?

Debates on the existence of man-made climate change featured across many forums – they are one of the favourite “off-topic” subjects

Overclockers UK Forums > Life > Speaker's Corner
Climate change, the facts, the theory
Computer engineering forum

 5 stars 2 votes
global warming?
Started by
Anglers' forum

CyclingNews Forum > Cafe > General
World Politics
Cycling forum

Do you think environmentalists do more harm than good?????
Student forum

Thread: Is the world headed for a climate change disaster in 50 years?

Daily Mail discussion forum

Page 89 of 181 <<First < ... 39 79 87 88 89 90
91 99 139 ... > Last >>

GameSpot > Forums > Off-Topic Discussion

"Global warming believers are feeling the heat"

Gamers' forum

Scientific debate in forums – what are they saying?

Outside scientific forums the debate on climate change is polarised, reflecting broader public debate – there are no shades of grey

Supporters of the mainstream science position on climate change cite the IPCC and its near-unanimity over man-made climate change. The focus was split between those who defended the scientific approach of the IPCC, and those who questioned the scientific credentials of the critics

Some argued for the IPCC's findings using scientific arguments

You have no idea how science works...

The IPCC base their findings on the work conducted analytic processes to come to their conclusions.

97% of them accept that humans are the main cause of climate change.

Others argued by questioning critics' credentials: unscientific, biased

Still, you've decided to play, and so now we know that your "equivalent" to the IPCC is Marc Morano, a right wing dimwit with a BA in *political* "science" and (as is usual) no understanding of actual science. He gets paid \$150,000 a year by CFACT (a conservative "think tank") to publish anti-science bollocks on his website.

Scientific debate in forums – what are they saying?

A dominant argument amongst those who question the mainstream science position on climate change is that the IPCC and scientific community are politicised and this influences their findings – those lone voices outside this “consensus” should be trusted more. Typically criticism is based on distrust of the source and science-based arguments are less used

Distrust of the IPCC/UN influencing the validity of the research

"UN appointed panel"

I kind of feel like the opposite must be true now.

The modelling is broken

The results biased

The data hidden to stop that being found out

A "line" is being agreed and anything contrary to it not disclosed
And its being politically motivated

The UN IPCC's own guidelines explicitly state that the scientific reports have to be “change[d]” to “ensure consistency with” the politically motivated Summary for Policymakers

Suspicion of a broader conspiracy is more important than scientific arguments

the real world. Articles like the one I posted just go to show how wide of the mark they are and I really enjoy seeing their predictions proven false, hopefully these timely reminders will inject a bit of reality into a discourse that has been monopolised by doom-mongers and eco-professionals dependent on 'climate change' for a living.

shrink again.I think the idea of man made warming is a con to harvest taxes and distract from the real issues such as fracking and globalisation.

Climate change debate – what matters?

For both sides the provenance of scientists matters as much as what the science says – who they work for, what they've studied, and what their political leanings are contextualise all findings

Although both sides use science to reinforce arguments, neither fully distinguished between verified scientific research and less reputable sources

Those who agree with the IPCC are more likely to use scientific sources, but only those that reinforce their opinions

There are two factions, one of which outnumbers the other by about 99 to 1.
The views do not hold equal weight, however much you might wish otherwise.

What I know is that despite all this global warming and Dr David Viner's predictions last December we experienced a record amount of snowfall.

Cook's "study" is fraudulent propaganda,

97% Study Falsely Classifies Scientists' Papers, according to
Cook's 97% Consensus Study Game Plan Revealed
The Statistical Destruction of the 97% Consensus

Those who disagree used scientific sources less often, and also only used those that supported their position

Climate change and personal insult in forums – an argument rather than a debate

Often discussions of climate change took the form of arguments rather than debates. “Trolling”, or saying something controversial designed to insult, frequently occurred on these forums

Vinter, not Viner. To paraphrase your final sentence, if you cannot even get the name right, what makes you think that you, or anybody else for that matter is in a position to give a worthwhile opinion on the subject?

You don't understand anything thing that is written above, either in support of the argument or against it do you you little cretin?

Good grief. Ignorance is like a badge of honour for you, isn't it?

1) You use wikipedia as a source. Lol. Just Lol.
2) You believe all sources as fact. 97%? Lol???

To conclude, you've not contributed anything.

Forums have ‘regulars’, so often the people debating know each other already, which usually makes the argument more *ad hominem*

Another absolute classic coming from the windbag who subjects anyone who'll listen to his dice theory over and over again...

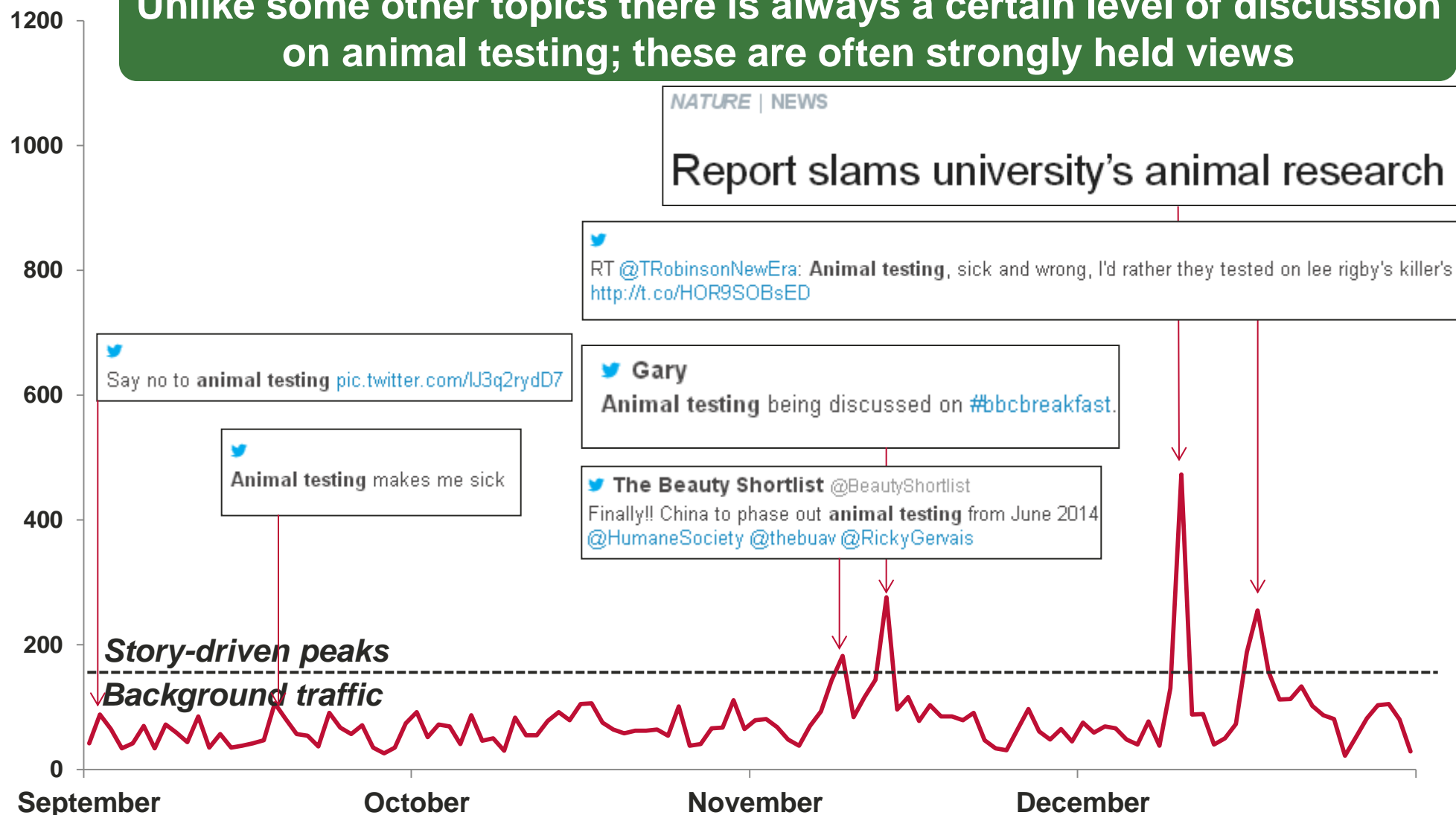
How's your history thesis on people dropping like flies from **heart disease** in the middle ages coming along? You can't get any more stupid than that. And you just pulled that one out the ether, and were then taken to task by just about everyone else on the thread. Finally having to admit that you just made it up.

Animal research



Animal research – continuous discussion with small peaks

Unlike some other topics there is always a certain level of discussion on animal testing; these are often strongly held views



A number of types of conversation around animal testing – general public

Medium:	Average mentions per day (over monitoring period)
Twitter	<u>64</u>
News websites	7
Forums	4
Blogs	2

Twitter traffic was the largest source of animal testing conversations over the monitoring period

Many conversations were unprompted from the general public:



Researching **animal testing** for my bio coursework is making me sad idk



Why do people who support **animal testing** even exist?



Commend China for Phasing Out **Animal Testing** bit.ly/HXre5X



I don't understand why animal testing still happens because like surely we as a human race know what is harmful and what isn't by now



Calgon tests on animals which is so confusing like why on earth would you need to test washing machine products on animals

A number of types of conversation around animal testing – advocacy groups

Reports from anti-testing organisations on campaigns and direct action were another major source



PETA
@peta

#PETAVictories of 2013: Our scientists help convince Indian government to BAN cosmetic tests on animals. #OneAtATime
pic.twitter.com/qpc4eEv4J1



Lush Fighting Animal Testing: Live Demonstration at Regents Street
fb.me/1MolITer3



PETA UK
@PETAUK

Insight on how PETA helps animals by working with industry and regulatory bodies on non-animal research methods petauk.org/b035

Most Mentioned Tweeters	TWEETS	RETWEETS ▼
@peta	101	391
@thepoke	14	161
@earthactivists	4	137
@robinsonnewera	7	136
@petauk	32	93
@allanimalrights	4	89
@thebuav	23	83
@crueltyfreeintl	17	80

Anti testing organisations such as PETA and BUAV were amongst the most mentioned sources



All Animal Rights
@allanimalrights

BRAZIL: Activists LIBERATE 178 Beagles from animal testing laboratory allanimalrights.org/News-901-BRAZI... #AnimalLiberation #BlackBlock #AnimalRights

A number of types of conversation around animal testing

– “naming and shaming” firms

Some firms – such as L’Oreal – were defending themselves on Twitter.
Others actively advertised their anti-testing credentials

isabelle

RT THIS, PLEASE SPREAD IT, DONT BUY LOREAL PRODUCTS, THEY USE **ANIMAL TESTING**
pic.twitter.com/F7bLA3YQXq



L’Oréal Paris UK
@LOrealParisUK

@ you can read all
about our position on animal testing
here
answers.loreal.com/animaltesting/...

*L’Oreal reached out to
Twitter critics to provide
them with information on
their animal testing stance*

Lush animal testing protest: Woman
subjected to 'experiments' in front of
horrified shoppers bit.ly/JnZUba via
@MailOnline

*The cosmetics firm Lush organised a
demonstration to highlight its non-testing
credentials*

Many other questions and statements:



out of interest where do UKIP stand
on animal testing / cruelty?



British heart foundation continues to carry out **animal testing** on dogs and cats. This is unacceptable pls
RT if you agree. We must stop this



Morrisons @Morrisons

We're against testing on animals and don't conduct or fund such tests on our own **brand**
cosmetic, toiletry, or household products!



Thought of the day: The Body Shop is AMAZING 100% vegetarian Completely FAIR TRADE ZERO **testing**
on animals... fb.me/S2DVW8wN

The higher conversation peaks: not only a spike in news coverage, but a spike in Twitter conversations

10th December – a highly critical report is published on animal testing at Imperial College

Revealed, how rats are **GUILLOTINED** in college's lab: Top university to overhaul animal research after undercover investigation finds appalling conditions

Pushing animal testing further into mainstream conversation provoked increased levels of existing conversations, and new conversations too

More conversation from anti-animal testing organisations

 BUAV
@thebuav

@timeshighered reports 'Imperial animal testing report 'should resonate' across sector'
bit.ly/1gVxYx2

Higher levels of companies offering reassurance on their stance to customers

 Next
@nextofficial

@ this logo is to show we are against animal testing. For any further information please visit frame.org.uk

New, topical debates on news and radio networks, and on forums

 LBC
@LBC

Imperial College has been caught mistreating animals in their laboratories. Is animal testing unethical & outdated?
[@theanthonydavis](https://twitter.com/theanthonydavis)

New, topical, humorous posts

STOP! Animal testing.
pic.twitter.com/rZfutNyUKF



Twitter traffic on animal testing is strongly anti-testing, often violently so: this topic arouses strong emotions in some

Organisations such as PETA and BUAV tweet predominantly about animal testing; and many on Twitter share their aversion to it

<i>Most frequently tweeted links – all anti testing:</i>	TWEETS	RETWEETS ▼
https://secure.peta.org/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=4965	3	170
http://twitter.com/ThePoke/status/410475211960504320/photo/1 <i>This humorous tweet was an exception</i>	17	162
http://twitter.com/TRobinsonNewEra/status/413040192115970048/photo/1	4	135
http://twitter.com/peta/status/396731196014485504/photo/1	0	104
http://twitter.com/PamelaDAnderson/status/412691750063333378/photo/1	6	50
http://action.peta.org.uk/ea-action/action?ea.client.id=5&ea.campaign.id=19444	48	48
https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=757765920916230&set=a.574287555930735.151001.198519903...	0	47
http://twitter.com/BeagleFreedom/status/396298387286286337/photo/1	0	47
http://www.hsi.org/news/press_releases/2013/11/china_phase_out_animal_tests_110713.html	37	42
http://crueltyfreedom.org.uk/		41

The anger over the subject is best exemplified by this tweet from EDL founder Tommy Robinson, which was retweeted 135 times

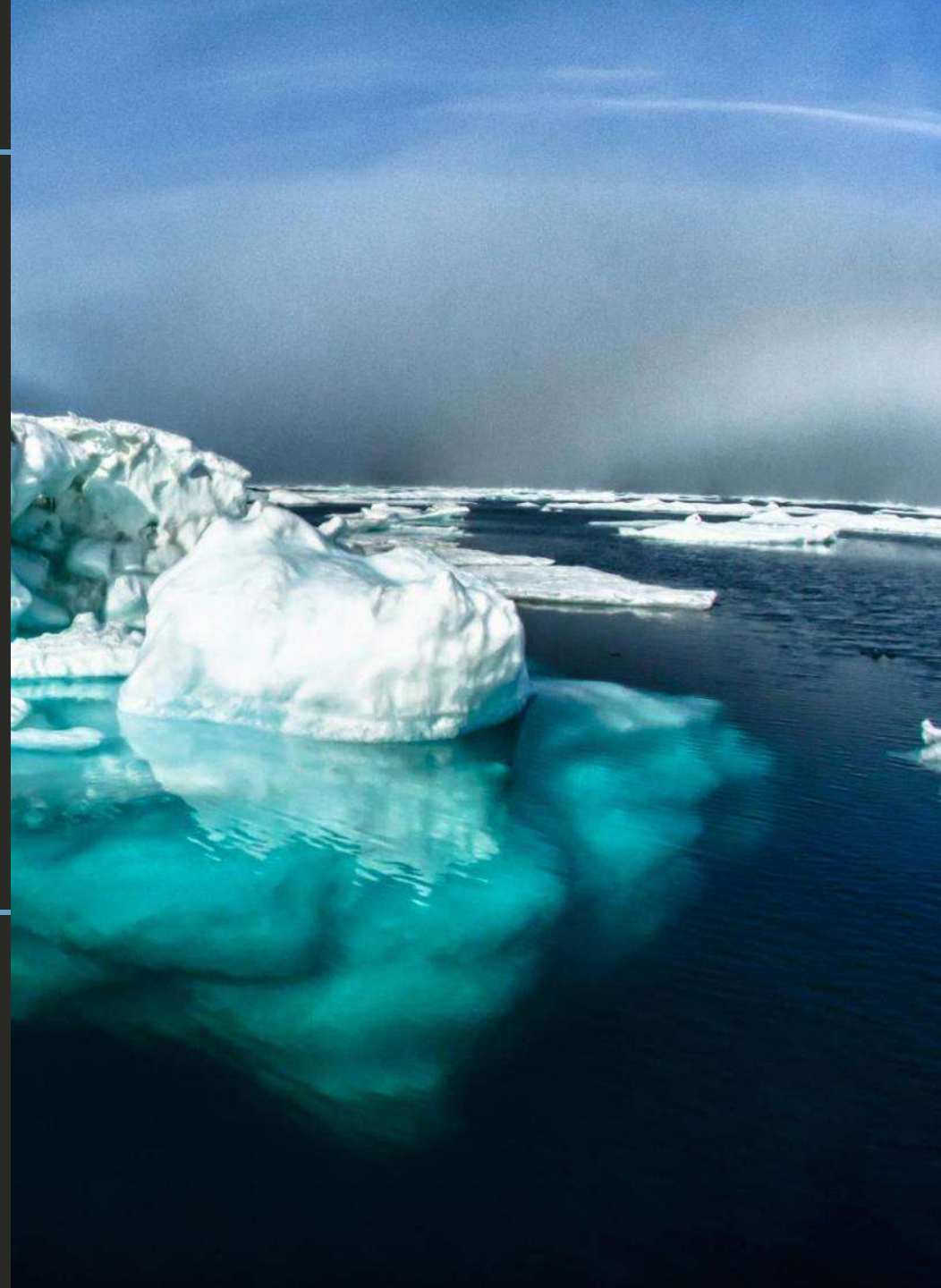


Tommy Robinson
@TRobinsonNewEra

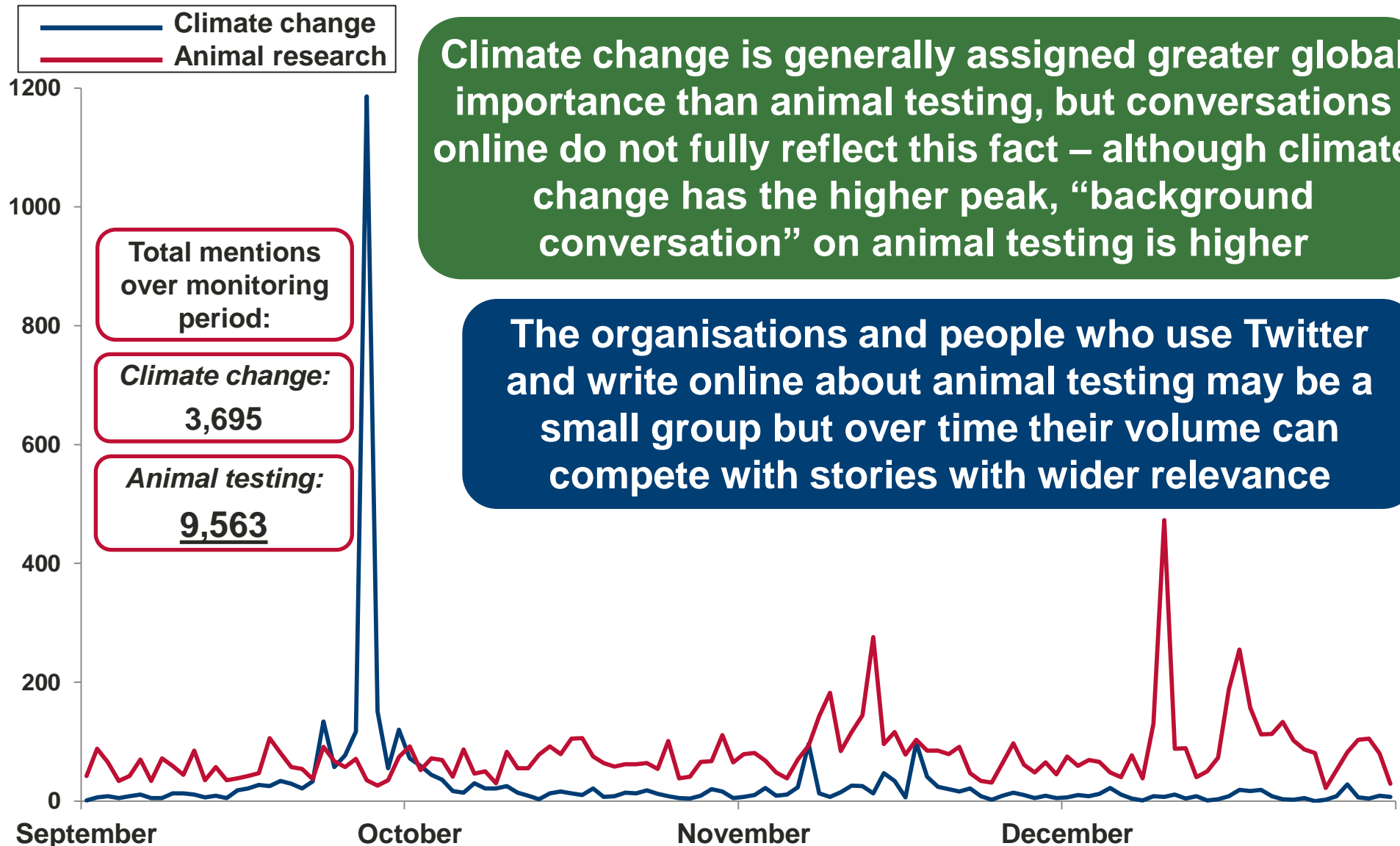
Animal testing, sick and wrong, I'd rather they tested on lee rigby's killer's

Climate change and animal research

Science, morality and conspiracy

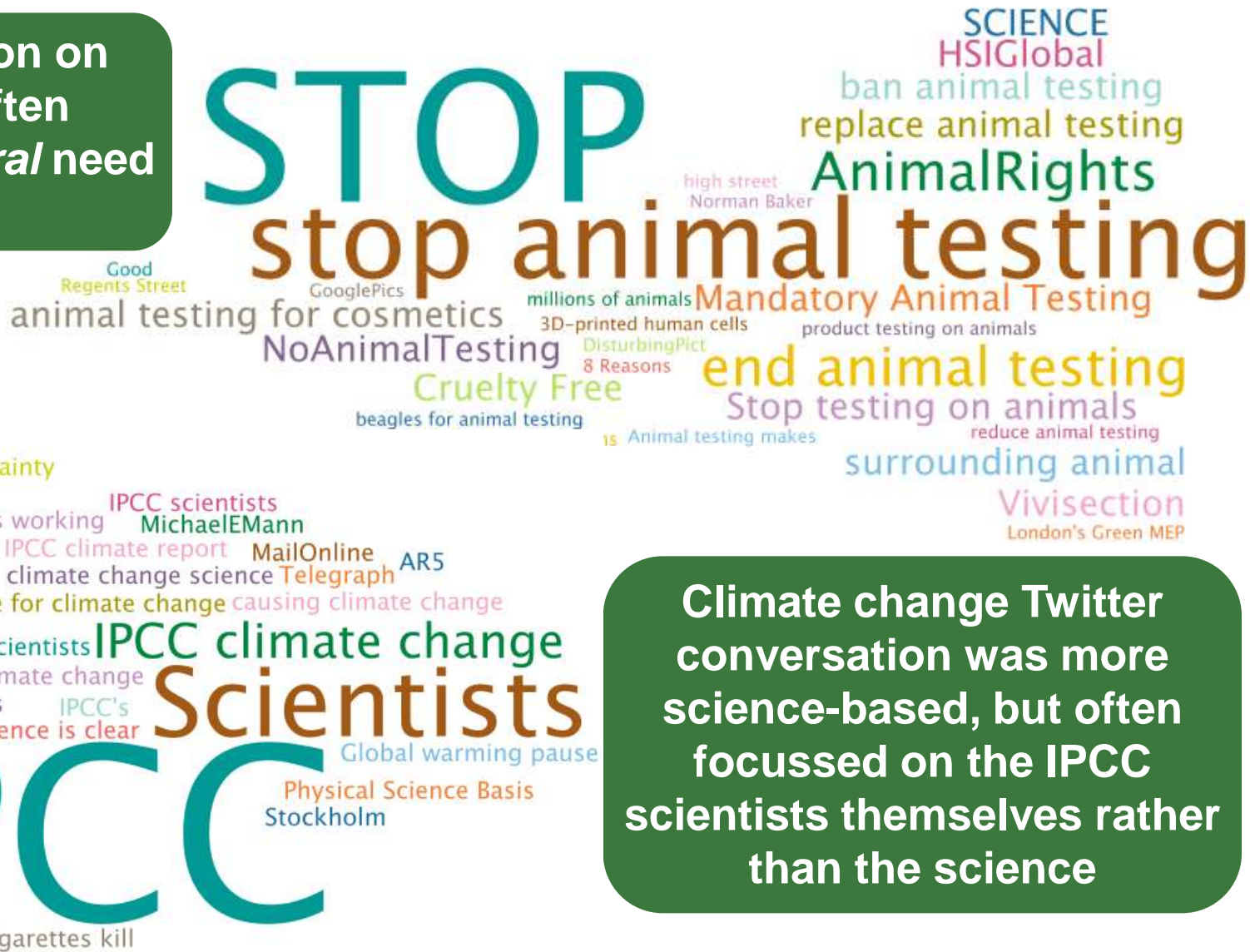


Very different online conversation levels



Both topics provoked scientific conversations, but other types of conversation were more prevalent

Twitter conversation on animal testing often focussed on the *moral* need to stop it



Climate change Twitter conversation was more science-based, but often focussed on the IPCC scientists themselves rather than the science

Different types of argument

Animal research conversations had less of a “debate” element to them
– typically conversations were entirely against testing.

The level of scientific conversation was also lower – the focus was normally on the ethics or morality of animal research

News coverage and Twitter conversations around climate change were similarly one sided, but on forums and blogs there was a great deal of debate for and against.

This debate was often based in science, with data and articles used to defend individual views. But other factors – particularly political considerations – were given at least equal weight in the argument

The debate over climate change was closer to a public discussion of science. But few people appeared to change their minds – scientific arguments were used to back up pre-set ideas and attitudes



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