

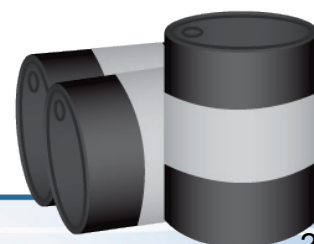
Petroleum Coke – A Mountain of Negative News Coverage

May - June, 2013



Introduction.....	3
Executive Summary.....	4
Total coverage.....	5
Coverage Tone.....	6
Quoted, journalists and publications.....	7
Twitter.....	8
Top influencers.....	9
Top words and links.....	10
About.....	11

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In May 2013, a black mountain of petroleum coke – a black, viscous byproduct of the refining process of oil from the Canadian oil sands – the size of a city block sprang up beside Detroit’s waterfront.

Almost immediately, media attention exploded around this pile of unsightly black waste. Reaching four stories tall at one point, the mountain of pet coke fueled an intense debate in the media. Opponents, including U.S. Rep. Gary Peters and former U.S. Vice-President Al Gore, accused the companies involved, including Koch Industries and Detroit Bulk Storage, of irresponsible and potentially illegal storage practices.

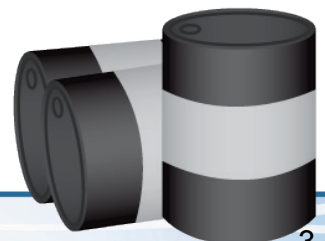
The situation and media backlash eventually led to public protests in Detroit over the issue (which coincided with the end of the study period for this report).

By July of 2013, however, the companies involved decided to stop trucking in pet coke to the controversial storage site.

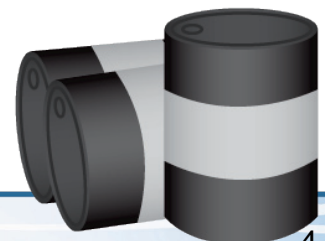
As of this writing, a permit application by Detroit Bulk Storage was being considered that would allow the pet coke storage to proceed.



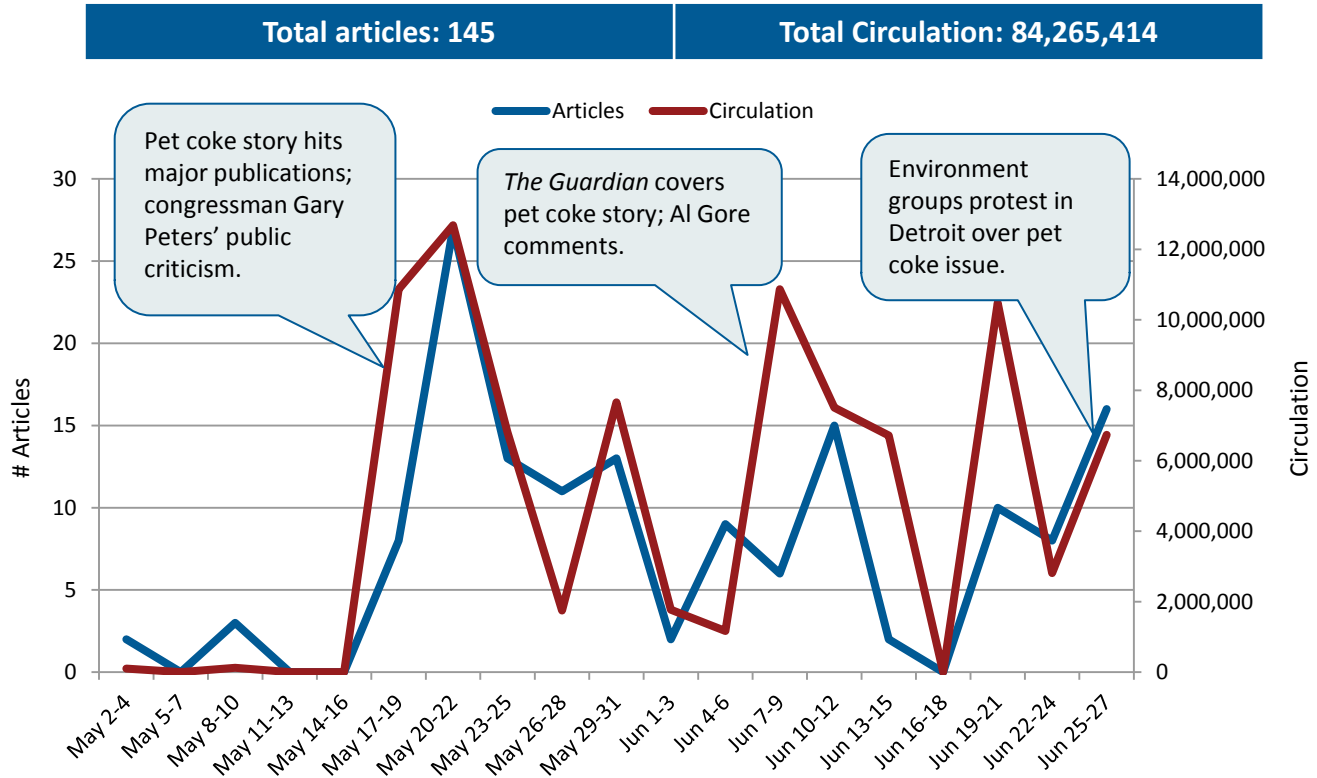
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- The issue was very negative for the Canadian oil sands industry overall and the three main companies involved – Koch Industries, Detroit Bulk Storage and Marathon Oil – as well as local governments at the city and state level.
- More than 50 per cent of coverage, much of it U.S.-based, noted the petroleum coke was from the Canadian oil sands.
- The top mentioned key messages throughout coverage was that a) The pet coke piles were a direct result of the Canadian oil sands industry; and b) Koch Industries was the company responsible for how and where the pet coke was stored. Another top-mentioned key message was that the companies involved lacked the necessary permits.
- More than one-third of coverage was negative towards local governments. Negative coverage was highest between May 20 and 22 with stories about Koch Industries being connected to the petroleum coke pile.
- Coverage toward local governments turned positive when representatives were seen as proactively trying to solve the problem. Indeed, one-quarter of coverage ended up being positive toward local governments, with the largest spike between May 26 and 28. This was largely due to Rep. Peters pushing for a health study on petroleum coke.
- Of private companies or entities mentioned in coverage, Koch Industries led the way with a 38 per cent share of voice followed by Imperial Petroleum Corp. (27%), Detroit Bulk Storage (23%) and the Moroun family (12%). Almost all mentions of these companies or groups were negative.
- Rep. Gary Peters was the most quoted individual within the coverage. His was quoted criticizing the handling of the petroleum coke piles and proposing a study of their health effects. Windsor MP Brian Masse was the second-most quoted individual.
- Tweets about the situation were slightly more positive than traditional media stories – 27 per cent of tweets were positive while 25 per cent of media stories were positive. Tweets were also slightly less negative.
- Negative tweets primarily focused on health effects, community outrage and the lack of oversight by government.
- Positive tweets primarily focused on legislation to clean up the petroleum coke piles, Rep. Peters calling for a health study and stories about the petroleum coke being shipped back to Canada.

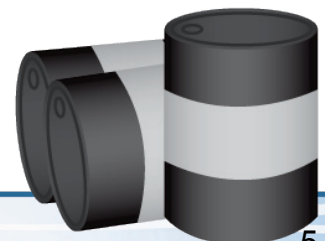


Coverage over time

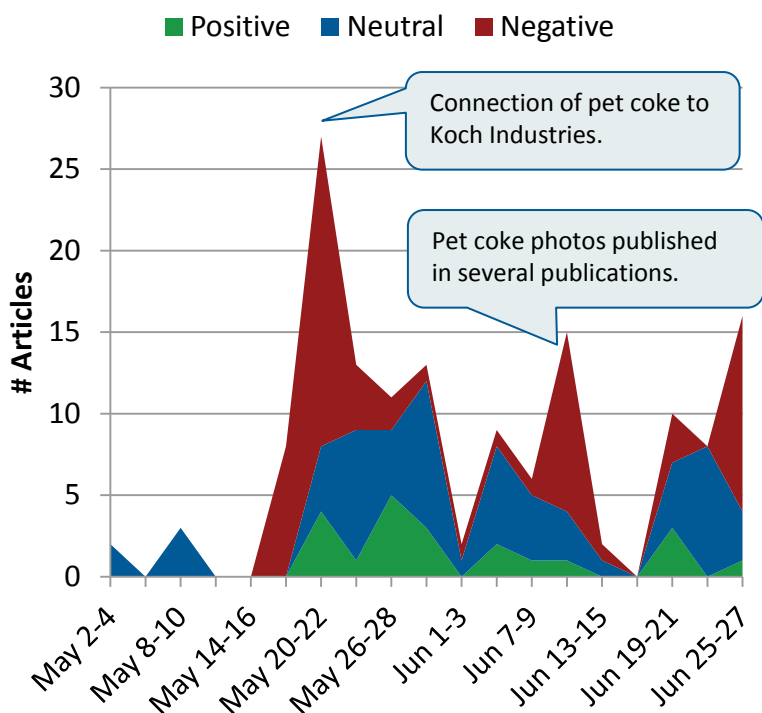


Highlights

- Coverage began in early May with sporadic mentions in the *Windsor Star* (“Petcoke site in Detroit lacks proper zoning, permits,” May 2).
- Audience reach spiked between May 17 and 19, as the story was picked up by several major publications (“Mountain of Petroleum Coke From Oil Sands Rises in Detroit” in *The New York Times* (Online), May 17).
- Total articles and audience reach hit their highest points between May 20 and 22 as the story trickled down to smaller publications and Rep. Gary Peters made public statements about the issue (“Congressmen seek answers on safety of pet coke piles along Detroit’s waterfront” in the *Detroit Free Press* (Online), May 22).
- Articles and circulation both peaked again after a story in *The Guardian* (“Detroit’s mountains of petroleum coke are ‘dirtier than the dirtiest fuel’” in *The Guardian* (Online), June 7). Coverage during June 10-12 was also driven by comments from former Vice President Al Gore (“Gore to Obama: Get ‘serious’” in *Politico* (Online), June 11).
- Coverage spiked a final time at the end of the month with a series of pet coke protests (“Dozens block traffic during protest over pet coke piles” in the *Detroit News*, June 25).



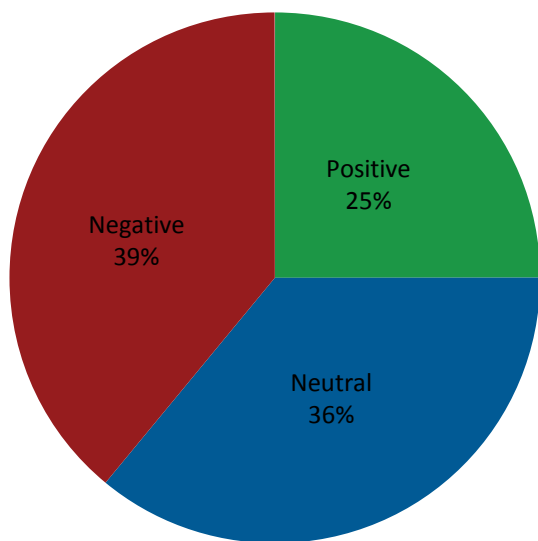
Tone over time



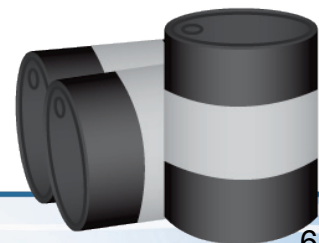
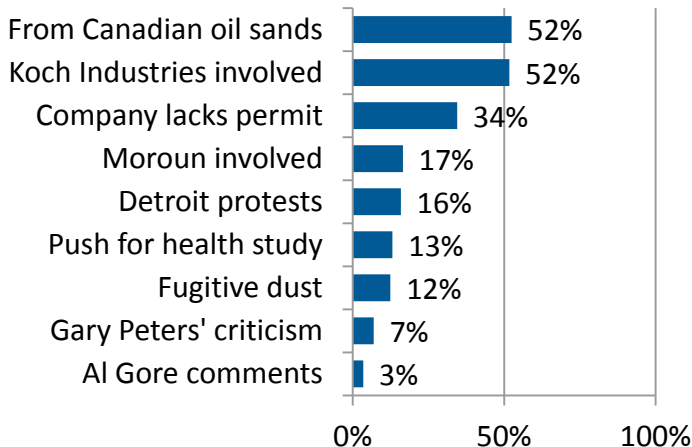
Highlights

- More than one third of coverage was negative towards local governments. Negative coverage was highest between May 20 and 22 with stories about Koch Industries being connected to the petroleum coke piles (“Koch brothers + Moroun = a growing pile of pet coke on the Detroit riverfront” in the *Detroit Free Press* (Online), May 21).
- Another spike in negative coverage came between June 10 and 12, as photos of the petroleum coke piles were published by several news websites (“LOOK: Stunning Photos Show Pet Coke’s Human Toll” in the *Huffington Post* (Online), June 11).
- One quarter of coverage was positive, with the largest spike between May 26 and 28. This was largely due to Rep. Peters pushing for a health study on petroleum coke (“Joined by local business leaders, Congressman Peters calls for study into petroleum coke piles on Detroit’s riverfront” in *MLive* (Online), May 28).
- In terms of key message share of voice, over 50 per cent noted the petroleum coke was from the Canadian oil sands. The second most-mentioned key message was the involvement of Koch Industries.
- Of private companies or entities mentioned in coverage, Koch Industries led the way with a 38 per cent share of voice followed by Imperial Petroleum Corp. (27%), Detroit Bulk Storage (23%) and the Moroun family (12%). Almost all mentions of these companies or groups were negative.

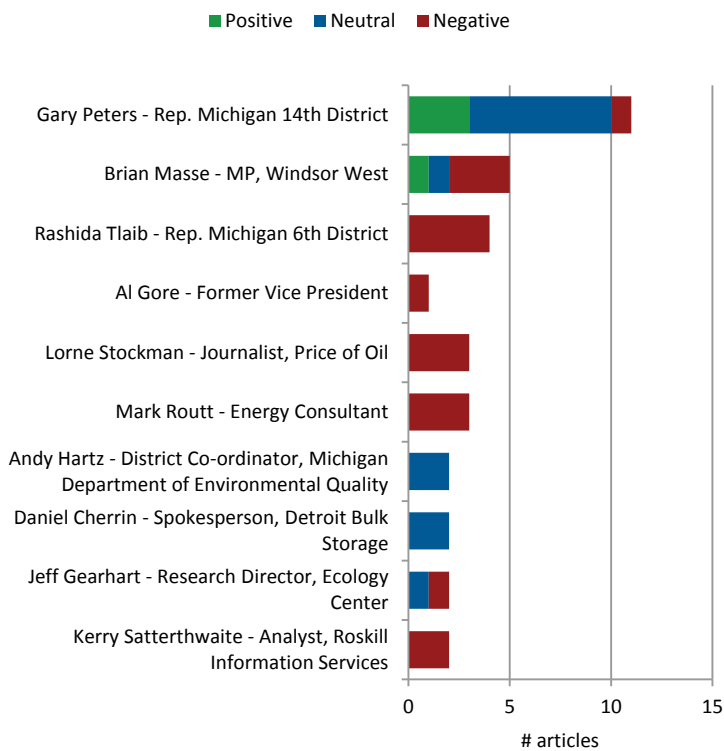
Overall Tone



Key message Share of Voice



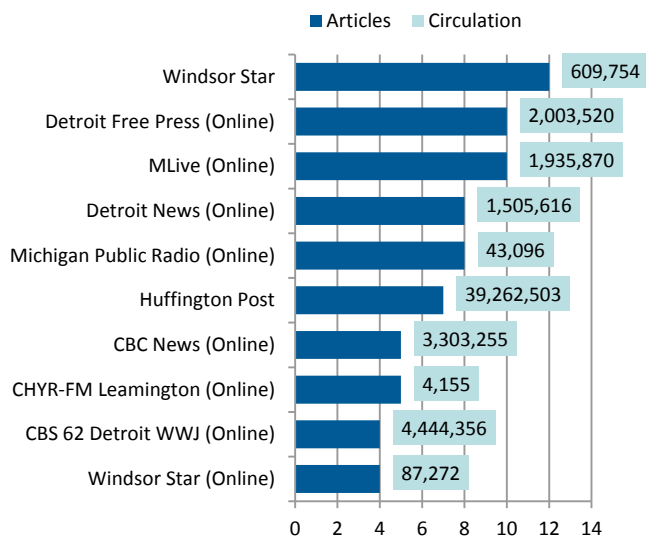
Top quoted spokespeople



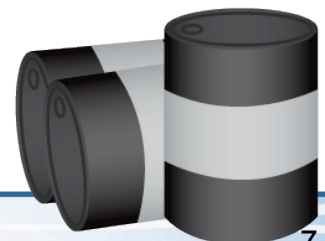
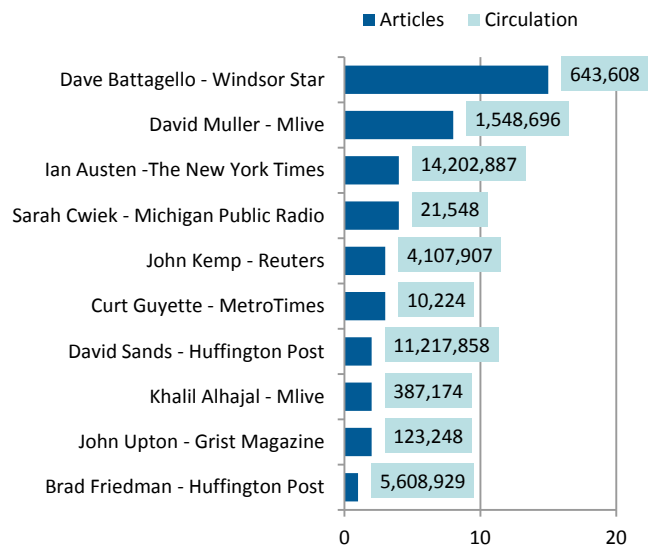
Highlights

- Rep. Gary Peters was the most quoted individual within the coverage. His was quoted criticizing the handling of the petroleum coke piles and proposing a study of their health effects.
- Windsor MP Brian Masse was the second-most quoted individual. He was primarily quoted in Canadian sources and negative articles.
- Only two of the top publications were not from the Detroit-Windsor area – *CBC News (Online)* and the *Huffington Post*. Seven of the top ten publications were American and three were Canadian.
- Dave Battagello from the *Windsor Star* was the top journalist. He broke the issue of pet coke piles lacking permits (“Permits lacking at petcoke site; Systemic lapses evident” in the *Windsor Star*, May 3) and covered petroleum coke developments throughout May.
- David Mueller was the journalist with the second-most coverage. His coverage primarily focused on Rep. Peters and developments in Congress (“Congressman Peters to again urge investigation into impact of petroleum coke as it piles up along Detroit’s waterfront” in *MLive (Online)*, May 22).

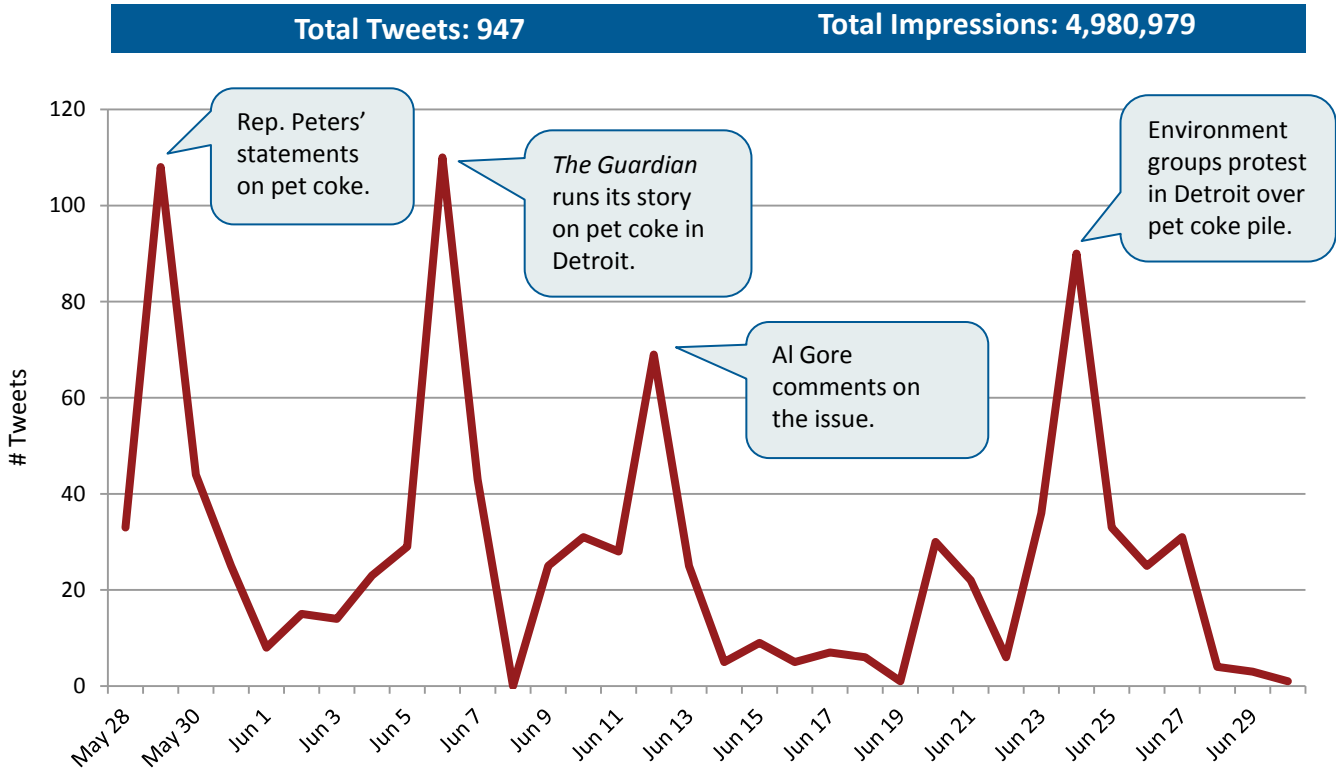
Top Publications



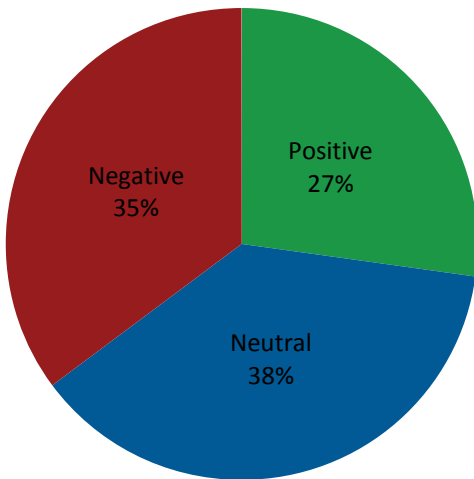
Top Journalists



Tone over time

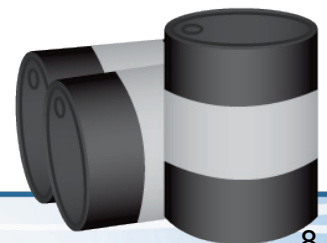


Twitter Tone



Highlights

- There were four key Twitter spikes: one after Rep. Peters made his comments about petroleum coke in Detroit in late May, after *The Guardian* ran its story on the pet coke issue in early June, after former Vice President Al Gore made comments about petroleum coke in mid-June, and then after the protests in Detroit at the end of June.
- Tweets about the situation were slightly more positive than traditional media stories – 27 per cent of tweets were positive while 25 per cent of media stories were positive. Tweets were also slightly less negative.
- Negative tweets primarily focused on health effects, community outrage and the lack of oversight by government.
- Positive tweets primarily focused on legislation to clean up the petroleum coke piles, Rep. Peters calling for a health study and stories about the petroleum coke being shipped back to Canada.



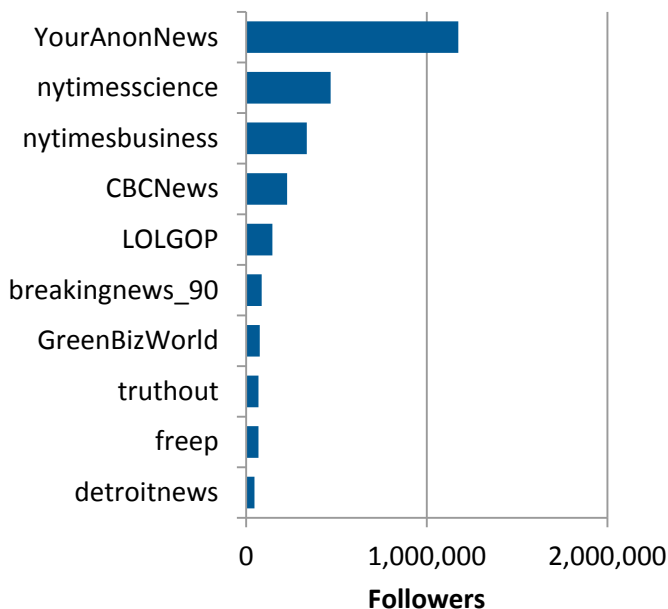
Top influencers

Handle	Retweet Ratio
@YourAnonNews	23
@nytimescience	13
@CBCNews	9
@CleanWaterMI	8
@NRDCBioGems	6
@insideclimate	5
@freep	4.33
@thecanadacom	4
@PlanIt4Planet	4
@DivineSpeech	3.5

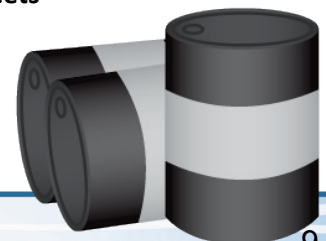
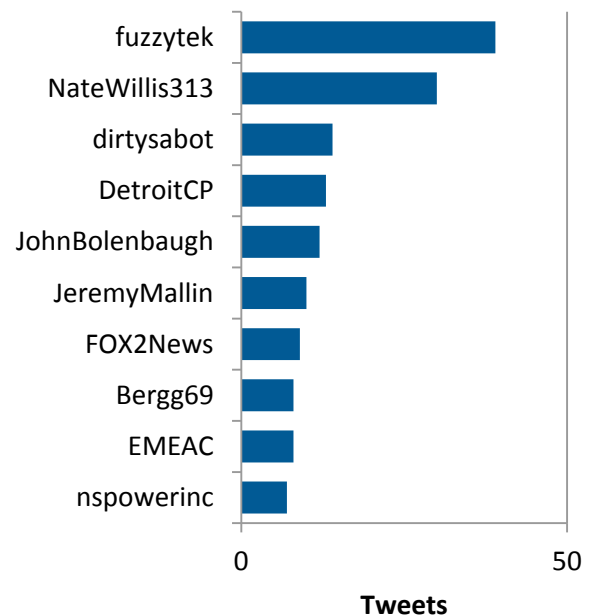
Highlights

- The popular handle from the group Anonymous (@YourAnonNews) was the top influencer, with a tweet about the Detroit protests retweeted 23 times. Anonymous was also the handle with the most followers.
- NYT Science (@nytimescience) was the second-highest influencer, with a tweet about petroleum coke being shipped back to Canada which was retweeted 13 times. NYT Science was also the handle with the second most followers.
- The top handles by followers included several news organizations such as *CBC News*, *The New York Times* and *The Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press*. Activist organizations such as Truth Out, LOLGOP and Anonymous were among the top users.
- Detroit activist Stephen Boyle (@fuzzytek) was the top user by number of tweets. His tweets included information about the Detroit protests and links to videos about the petroleum coke issue.

Top handles by followers



Top handles by tweets

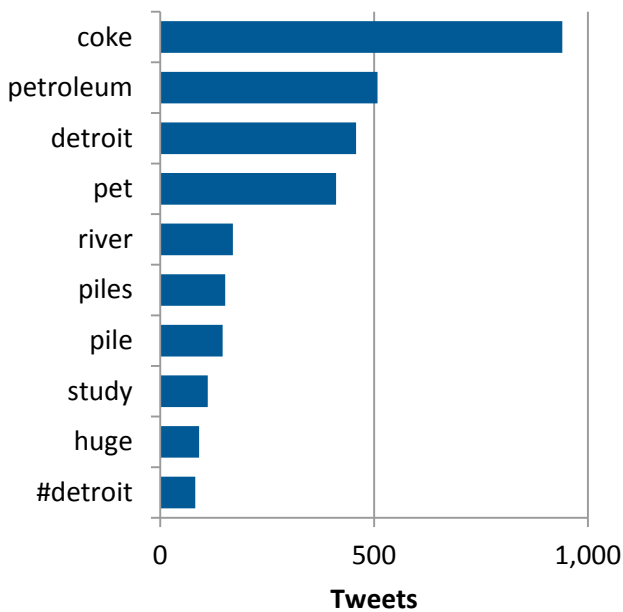


Top links

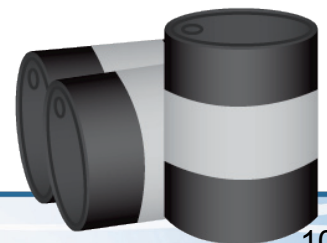
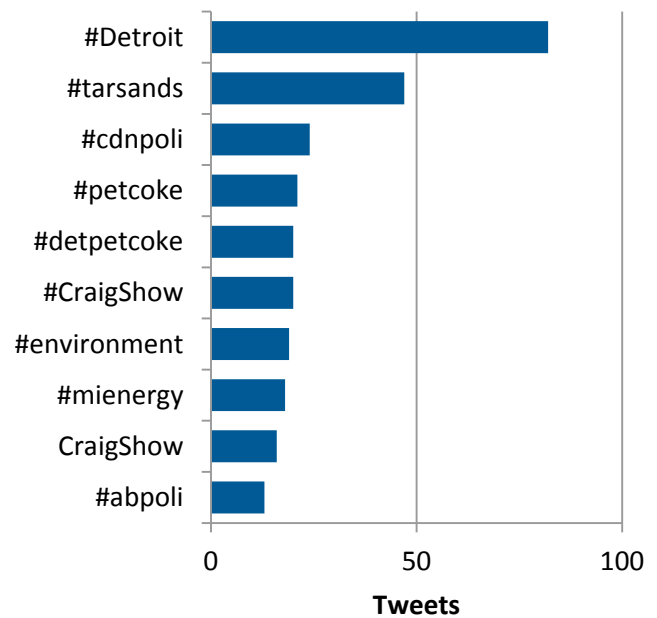
Link	Tweets
Push on for petroleum coke study before Keystone pipeline gets OK	38
Detroiters Block Dock In Pet Coke Protest	24
The Koch Brothers' Toxic Mountain of Petroleum Coke	19
Disturbing Report Confirms DTE Is Burning Pet Coke in Monroe Plant	15
Canadian Utility Finds a Use for Detroit's Pile of Oil Sands Byproduct	12



Top words



Top hashtags



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