

# MISQ Archivist

## Algorithmic Processes of Social Alertness and Social Transmission: How Bots Disseminate Information on Twitter

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### Abstract

Despite increased empirical attention, theory on bots and how they act to disseminate information on social media remains poorly understood. Our study leverages the conduit brokerage perspective and the findings of a multiple case study to develop a novel framework of *algorithmic conduit brokerage* for understanding information dissemination by bots and the design choices that may influence their actions. Algorithmic conduit brokerage encompasses two intertwined processes. The first process, *algorithmic social alertness*, relies on bot activity to curate and reconfigure information. Algorithmic social alertness is significant because it involves action triggers that dictate the kinds of information being searched, discovered, and retrieved by bots. The second process, *algorithmic social transmission*, relies on bot activity to embellish and distribute the information curated. Algorithmic social transmission is important because it can broaden the reach of information disseminated by bots through increased discoverability and directed targeting. The two algorithmic conduit brokerage processes we offer are unique to bots and distinct from the original conceptualization of conduit brokerage, which is rooted in human activity. First, since bots lack the human ability of sensemaking and are instead fueled by automation and action triggers rather than by emotions, algorithmic conduit brokerage is more invariant and reliable than human conduit brokerage. Second, automation increases the speed and scale of information curation and transfer, making algorithmic conduit brokerage not only more consistent but also faster and more extensive. Third, algorithmic conduit brokerage includes a set of new concepts (e.g., action triggers and rapid scaling) that are specific to bots and therefore not applicable to human conduit brokerage.

**Keywords:** Bots, Information Dissemination, Information Transfer, Algorithmic Social Alertness, Algorithmic Social Transmission, Algorithmic Conduit Brokerage, Action Triggers, Reconfiguration, Embellishment, Rapid Scaling, Social Media