Room to Grow: Understanding Factors Behind Volitional Personal Change Using Social Media

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Research Question
- Can we computationally identify characteristics of people who are likely to persist in personal change?

Data
- People’s online posting behavior can predict their persistence in self-improvement.

Focus on those who post for the first time within 5 month period
- Persistently active - 3 or more posts
- Temporarily active - only one post

Task
- Classify those whose interest in self change persists (persistently active) vs those with momentary interest (temporarily active)
- Use posting behavior of each person
  - Prior general posts on Reddit
  - Initial r/getdisciplined-specific posts

Methods
- Classify those whose interest in self change persists (persistently active) vs those with momentary interest (temporarily active)
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Fig 1: Topical interests from 30-topic LDA model based on prior behavior

Table 1. Prediction results for binary classification of activity level in r/getdisciplined.

Fig 2: Emotional features from NRC Emotion Lexicon based on initial r/getdisciplined activity