Evolution of Retweeting

Modal Affordances of Twitter
- Character limit of 140 characters per tweet
- Usernames and RT notation count towards this limit
- Addressivity
- Username notation results in a notification to the user that you are "addressing" or talking about them
- Retweet as a user-created convention
- As there was no affordance built into the Twitter medium to replicate "organic" RT, but to work alongside it

• In 2009, Boyd, Golder, & Lotan conducted a study of retweeting practices and found that:
  - The most common syntax for retweeting is: (optional comment) RT @user (Original Text)
  - Attempting to conform to the modal affordances of Twitter can cause erasure of authorship and attribution

Twitter introduces retweet interface
- In 2010, Twitter introduced a new tool for retweeting, which replicates the tweet schlussform:
  - "It will be very quick and easy to retweet; you’ll never have to edit the text, and you also won’t have to worry if your followers have already seen something, so this should encourage retweeting more and more useful stuff flowing forward."

- The participants were not intended for the new retweet function to replace the "organic" RT, but to work alongside it
- Our question is: how did the introduction of this new feature change retweeting practices?

Our framework
- In current Twitter usage, we find the coexistence of both the user-created RT form and the form introduced by Twitter
  - Preserving Retweets
  - Direct reproduction of a user’s tweet, including username and avatar as well as original text. Does not allow for added content by the retweeter. Facilitated by Twitter interface.
  - Adapting Retweets
  - Copy of a tweet made by a retweeter, usually signaled by the acronym "RT". Allows for added content and modification of original tweet. Does not allow for added content by the retweeter. Facilitated by some Twitter clients but not the Twitter interface.

The Takeaway:
Preserving Retweets remove the possibility for confusion of attribution, but are inflexible
Adapting Retweets allow for user input and modification, but often result in confusion over authorship and attribution

Evolution of Participant Roles

Traditional production roles
- Animator – the participant who physically utterances; “the agent who scripts the lines”
- Author – the participant who composes the utterance; “the agent who scripts the lines”
- Principal – the participant responsible for the utterance; “the party to whose position the words attest”

Twitter production roles
- Author – the participant who composes the utterance; “the agent who scripts the lines”
- Principal – the participant responsible for the utterance; “the party to whose position the words attest”
- Animator – the participant who physically produces the text; “the typist”

Worked References: