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## How the UK's first #McStrike was tweeted

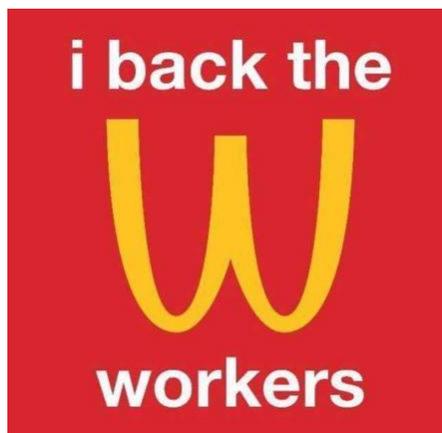
*Dr Wil Chivers*

*27<sup>th</sup> April 2018*

***In September 2017, McDonald's workers went on strike for the first time in the UK. Researchers at WISERD analysed the social media conversation that surrounded the 'McStrike' at the time. With a second McStrike scheduled for the 1<sup>st</sup> May Wil Chivers, Helen Blakely and Steve Davies outline key findings from this research.***

*Young workers unite*

McDonald's is a major user of zero-hours contracts, reportedly employing [90%](#) of its workforce in this way ([42%](#) of whom are under 21).



[Critics](#) attack these arrangements as exploitative, particularly for the low waged, and workers have responded with sustained collective action to fight for decent work around the world, most notably [Fight for \\$15 in the US](#).

On 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 40 McDonald's employees in two UK restaurants, mostly aged 25 and under, went on strike for £10 an hour, an end to zero hours contracts and recognition of their union.

### *#McStrike on Twitter*

One key element of the campaign was the way the physical presence on the picket line was complemented by its social media presence. McStrike was a simple and effective hashtag (a McStroke of genius if you like), and using this hashtag, we collected live data from Twitter over the two weeks before, during and after the strike. This produced a little over 90,000 tweets featuring #McStrike, from 46,247 different users. We analysed this activity, identifying influential Twitter accounts and tweets. The network image below captures the first week's activity:



increase pay for all staff (the franchises set their own pay rates). McStrike has implications for how we reformulate traditional conceptualisations of strike activity in the contemporary era, particularly in the light of social media.

## **W. Chivers**

This blog is the author's own work.

For original post see: <https://wiserd.ac.uk/news/how-uks-first-mcstrike-was-tweeted-0>