

Studying Rumour-spreading Users in Social Media – A Case Study

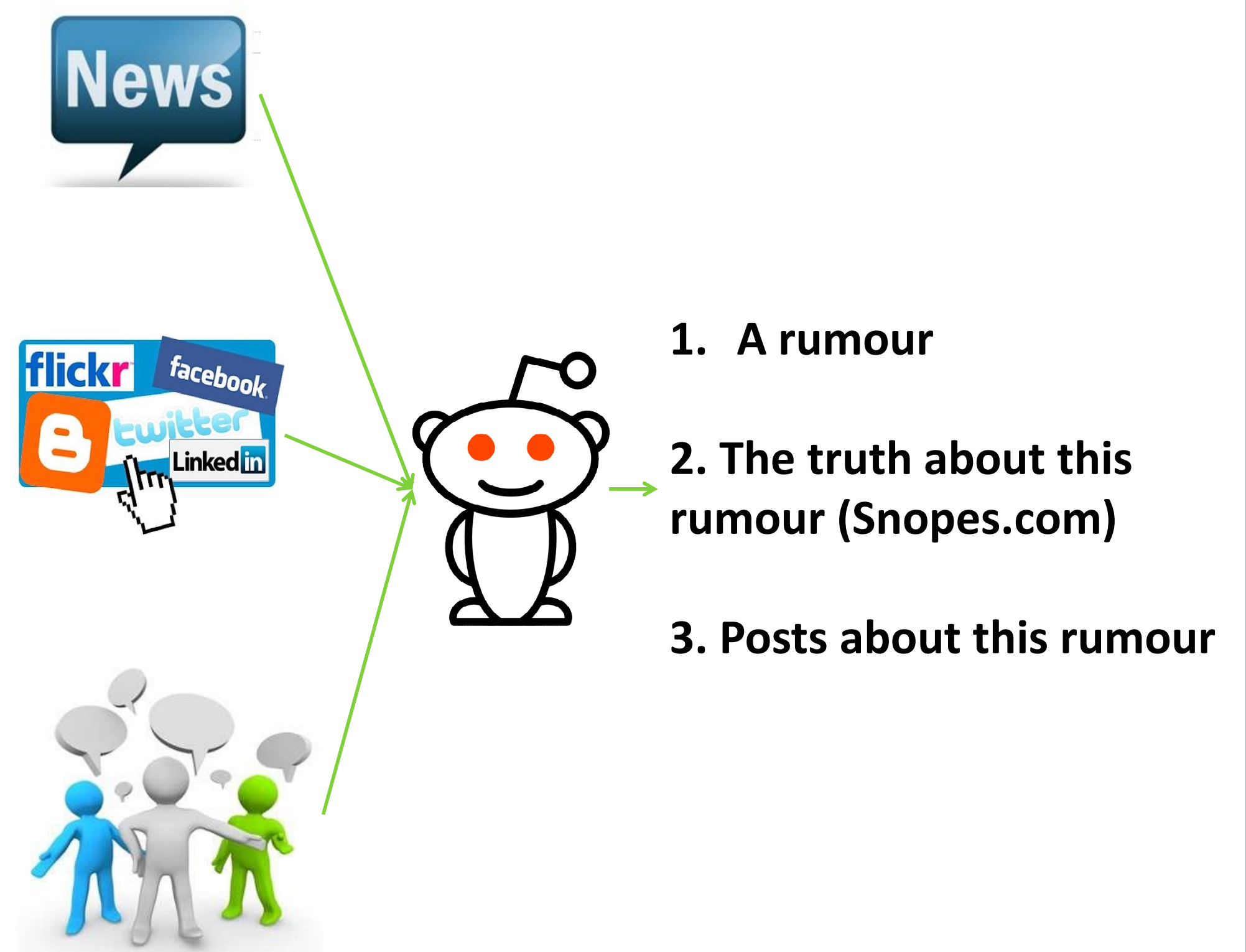
1. Introduction

- Online social networks (OSNs) are networks of online interactions and relationships that are formed and maintained through various social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Reddit and Twitter.
- OSNs have recently emerged as the favored media for spreading information such as breaking news, sport events, and fashion trends [1].
- Despite their popularity, OSNs also have a “dark” side. As well as spreading credible information, OSNs can spread rumours, which are truth-unverifiable statements that are usually spread in uncertainty situations [2].
- We used “Obama is a Muslim” in Reddit from 2007 to 2015 as our case study rumour due to its persistence, popularity, and controversy.

2. Research Question

1. Based on user activities in Reddit, could we determine if there is a specific group of users that is greatly interested in discussing and spreading rumours?
2. Based on user activities in Reddit and Bordia and DiFonzo’s [3] rumour-spread motivation theory, could we determine if there is a rumour-spreading personality type in Reddit who, for example, “generally supports a false rumour”, “generally rejects a false rumour”, or “generally jokes about a false rumour”?
3. Will visualizing rumour spread in Reddit provide better insight into how users interact with rumours?

3. Reddit



4. Rumour-discussing Users

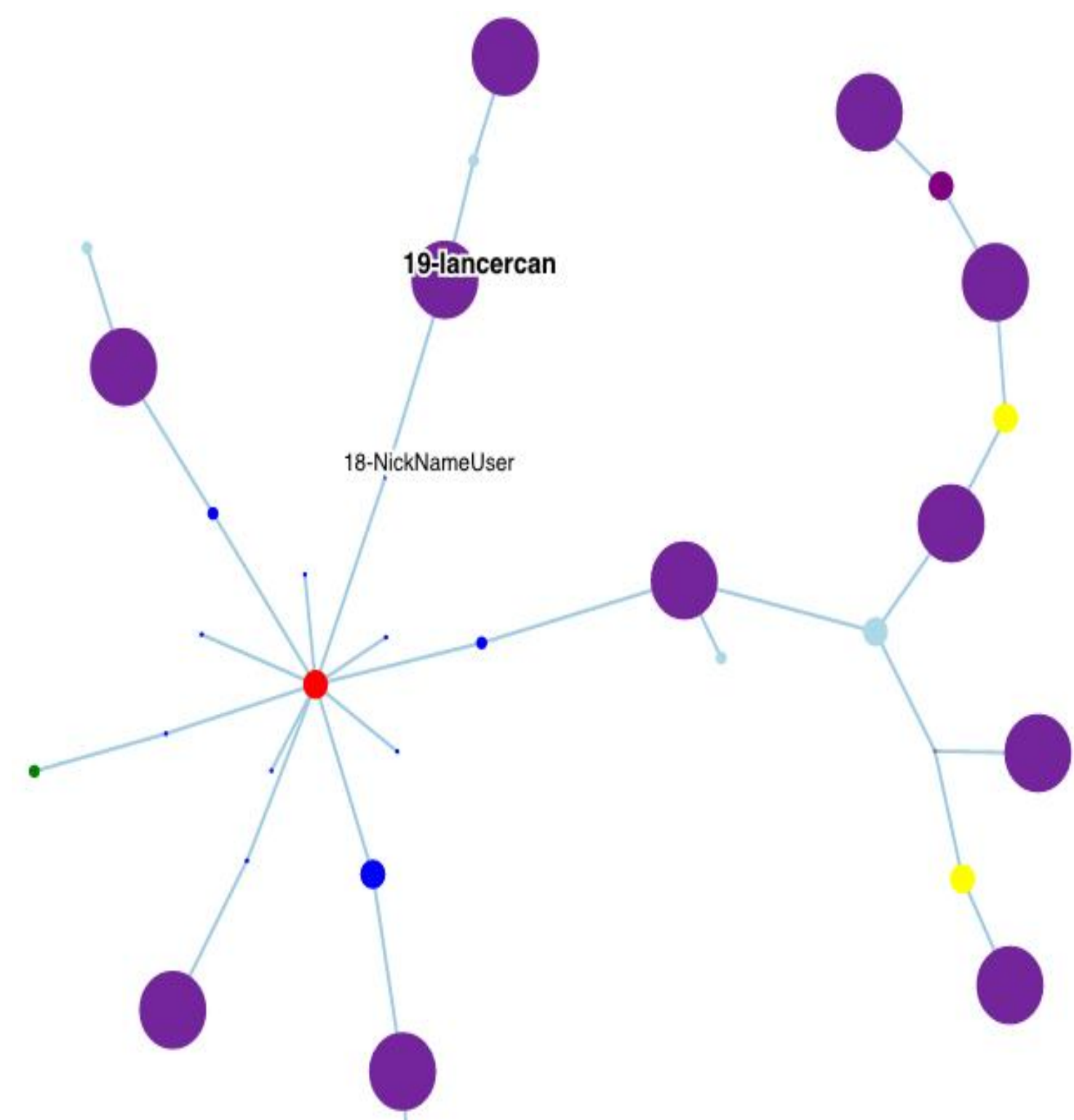


Figure 1. User “lancercan” interaction graph about the rumour.

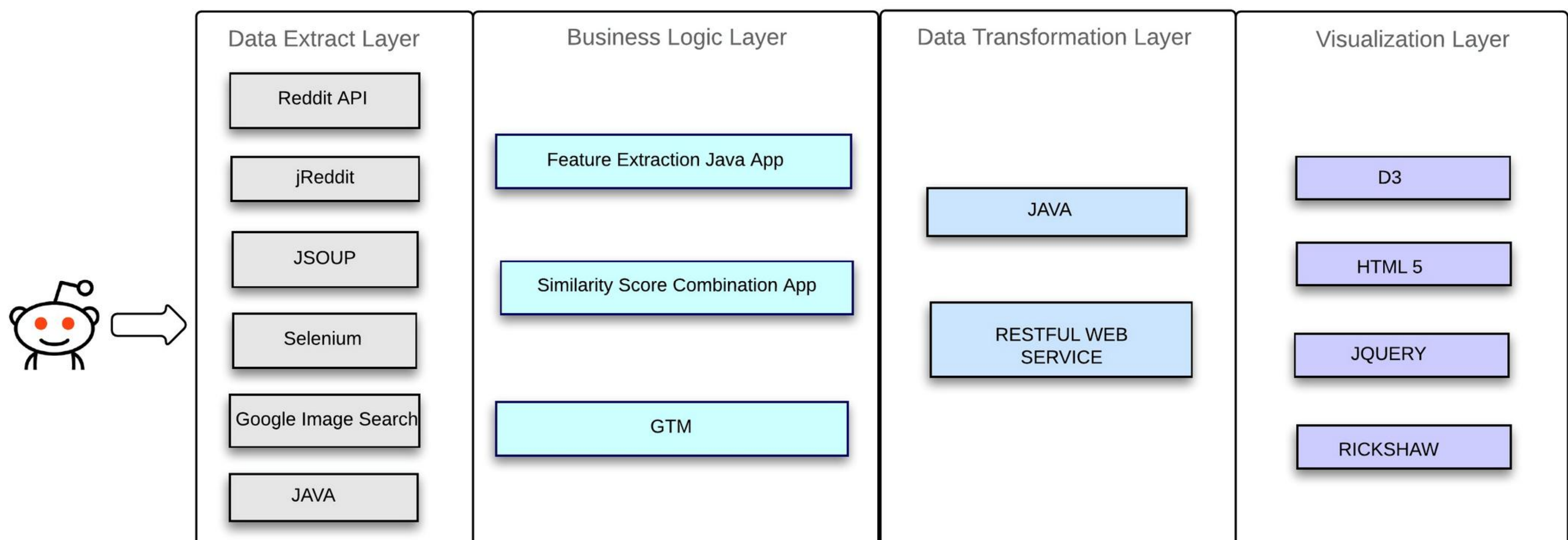


Figure 2. The visualization framework.