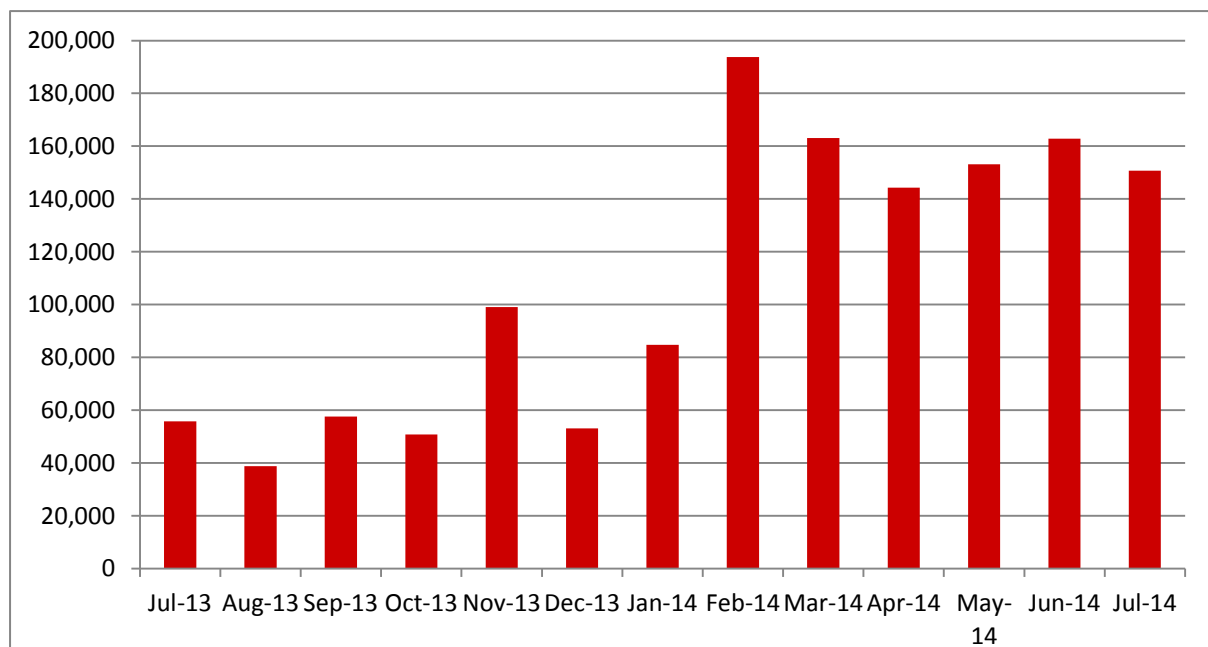


## A social intelligence study to analyse user-generated commentary of the Scottish independence referendum

### Summary

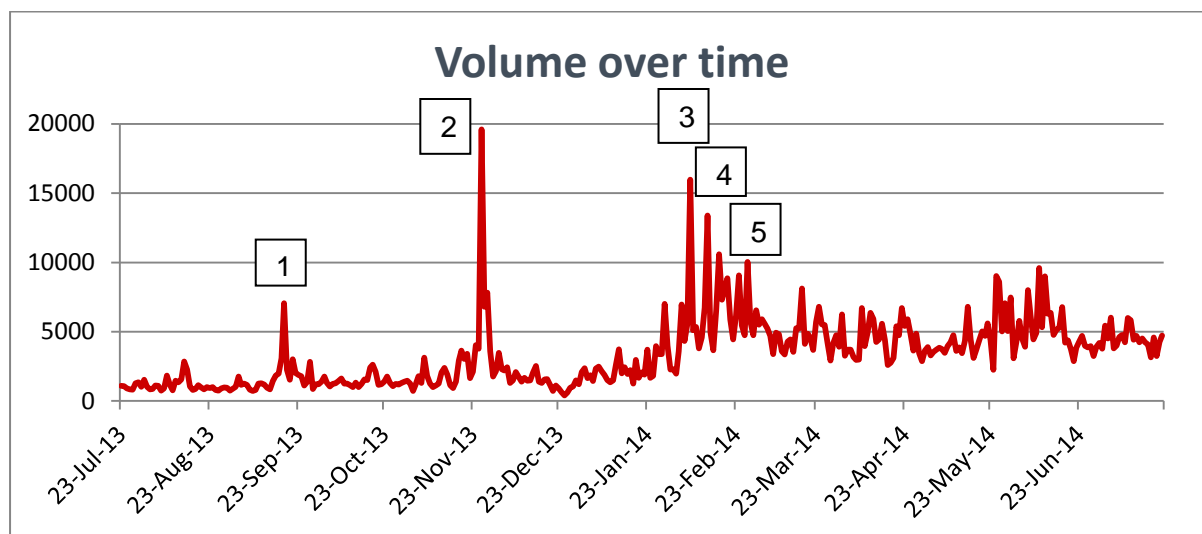
1. [Commentary volumes peaked in February 2014](#)
2. [Pro-independence comments dominate](#)
3. [‘No’ camp has yet to settle on a favoured hashtag](#)
4. [‘Yes’ camp share of voice peaked in April](#)
5. [Alex Salmond is most-mentioned politician](#)

#### 1. Commentary volumes peaked in February 2014



Commentary was running at around 50,000 comments per month in 2013, surging to a peak of 190,000 in Feb 2014, before dropping back slightly and is now running at around 150,000 per month.

The biggest single day for comments was 26 November 2013, when Alex Salmond launched his independence “blueprint”. The daily volume chart provides additional insights into what drives commentary:



1. 1 year to go till referendum (18 Sep 2013)
2. Alex Salmond launches independence blueprint white paper (26 Nov 2013)
3. David Cameron gives speech at Olympic Stadium (7 Feb 2014)
4. George Osborne announces there will be no currency union (13 Feb 2014)
5. Jose Manuel Barroso says joining EU would be 'difficult' (16 Feb 2014)

## 2. Pro-independence comments dominate

‘Yes’ campaigners are doing a much better job of energising their supporters to share their opinions on social media – 85% of affiliated hashtag mentions are pro-independence, outweighing pro-union hashtag mentions by 6:1.

- Top 3 hashtags overall: #indyref (1), #scotland (2), #voteyes (3)
- Top 3 pro-independence hashtags: #voteyes (3), #independence (5), #yes (6)
- Top 3 pro-union hashtags: #bettertogether (9), #voteno (32), #nothanks (34)

The most frequent hashtags mentioned are:

Rank	Hashtag	Affiliation
1	#indyref	both
2	#scotland	both
3	#voteyes	yes
4	#referendum, #referendum2014	both
5	#independence	yes
6	#yes	yes
7	#alexsalmond	yes
8	#snp, #snp14, #snp13	yes
9	#bettertogether, #bettertogethercampaign	no
10	#yesscot, #yesscotland	yes

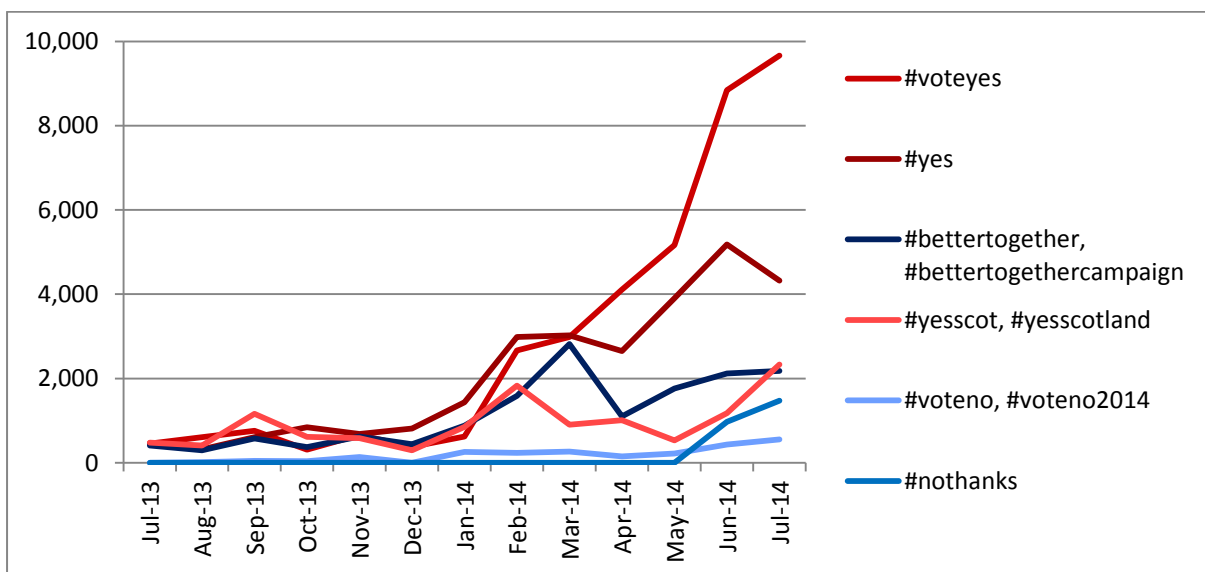


Some hashtags are used by both camps, such as **#indyref**, **#scotland** and **#referendum**, although “Scottish” ones are more likely to appear together with pro-independence hashtags:

- ‘Yes’ camp usage of **#scotland** (91%), **#scottish** (98%) and **#scots** (98%) are more likely to be used in conjunction with pro-independence hashtags than average (85%)
- **#indyref** (83%) and **#referendum** (81%) are slightly more likely than average to be used in conjunction with ‘No’ camp hashtags

**#indyref** also frequently appears in ‘neutral’ or ‘undecided’ comments – 60% of **#indyref** mentions appear in comments that do not also mention a pro-union or pro-independence hashtag, suggesting plenty of undecideds are joining the debate.

### 3. ‘No’ camp has yet to settle on a favoured hashtag



The ‘Yes’ campaign seems to be coalescing around the **#voteyes** hashtag, which has seen strong growth in usage every month since Jan 2014.

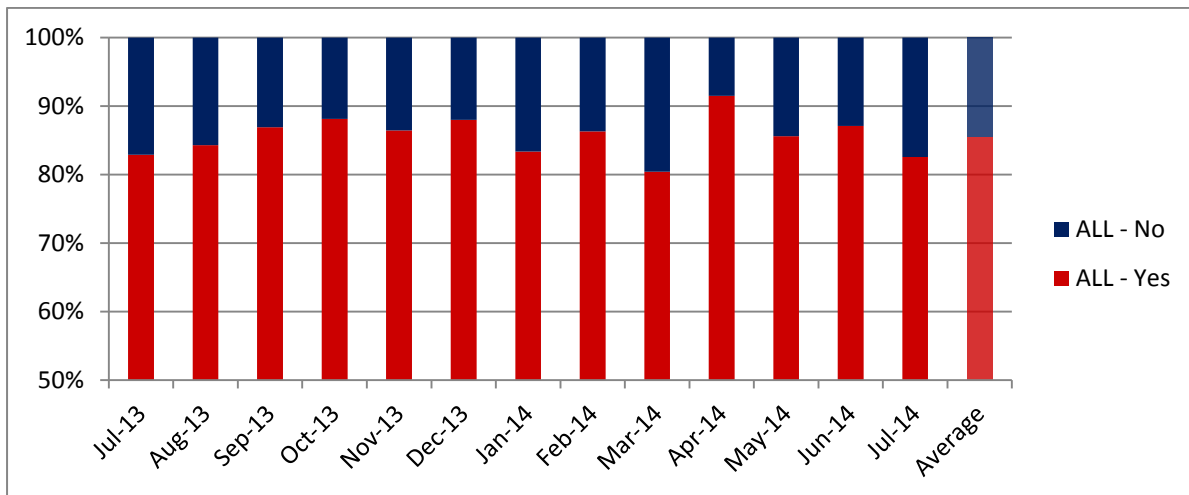
**#voteno** does not have the same level of usage among ‘No’ campaigners.

**#bettertogether** (or **#bettertogethercampaign**) is used most frequently, but has seen little growth since May 2014.

This is probably due to the **#nothanks** hashtag, which made its first appearance in June 2014, and may prove to be a stronger rallying point for the pro-unionists.



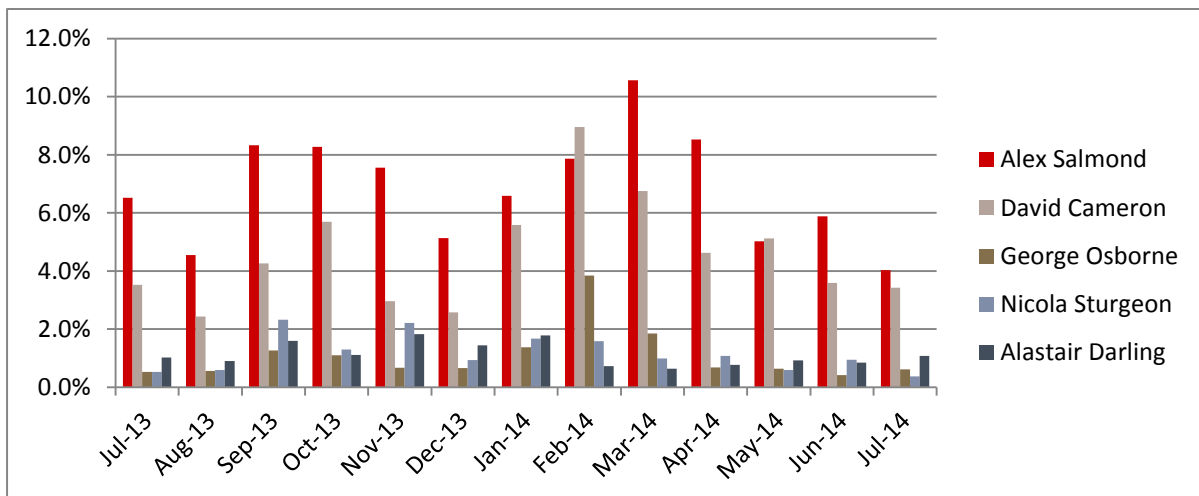
#### 4. 'Yes' camp share of voice peaked in April



In April 2014, 91% of all affiliated hashtag mentions were pro-independence, but this share has fallen to 83% in July 2014, below the 12-month average of 85%.

March 2014 saw the peak share of voice for the 'No' camp at 20%, compared to an average of 14%, with July 2014 (17%) as the second highest month.

#### 5. Alex Salmond is most-mentioned politician



Alex Salmond has been the most-mentioned politician in every month except two – Feb 2014 and May 2014 – when David Cameron was most-mentioned. Over the past year Salmond has been mentioned in 7% of comments, compared to Cameron's 5%.

George Osborne is 3<sup>rd</sup> most-mentioned, peaking in Feb 2014 when he announced there would be no currency union in the event of a 'yes' vote.

Nicola Sturgeon, Deputy First Minister of Scotland is 4<sup>th</sup> in the table of most-mentioned politicians.

Alastair Darling, leader of the Better Together campaign, completes the top 5. Darling gets mentioned in just 1% of referendum comments, which is perhaps a concern, given his role.

