

# SONA 2015: The state of social media engagement

Issued by [Ornico](#)

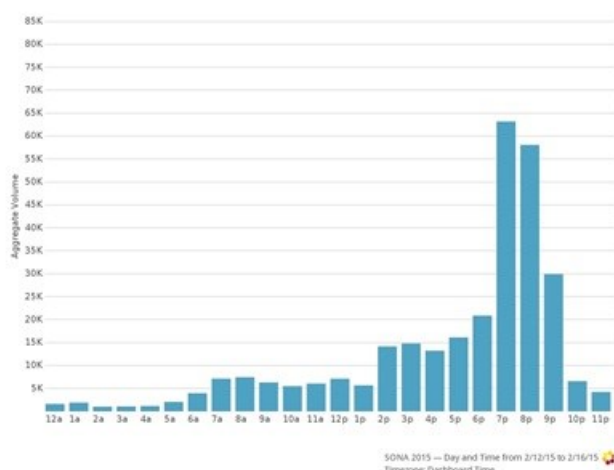
25 Feb 2015

The State of the Nation Address 2015 (#SONA2015) and [subsequent SONA debate](#) saw a massive increase in social media conversations compared to 2014. This according to research by brand intelligence research firm Ornico.

The initial [social media analysis of 2014 and 2015 data](#) revealed that mentions of SONA had increased from 7,647 posts in 2014 to 28,353 posts for the same period a year later. This speaks to the growth of social media and the increased activity of opposition parties who are vocal about their position. Julius Malema (or @Julius\_S\_Malema) overtook the ANC as the most frequently mentioned Twitter handle in 2015 leading up to SONA, which is also telling given that the EFF also gave rise to the now popular #paybackthemoney.

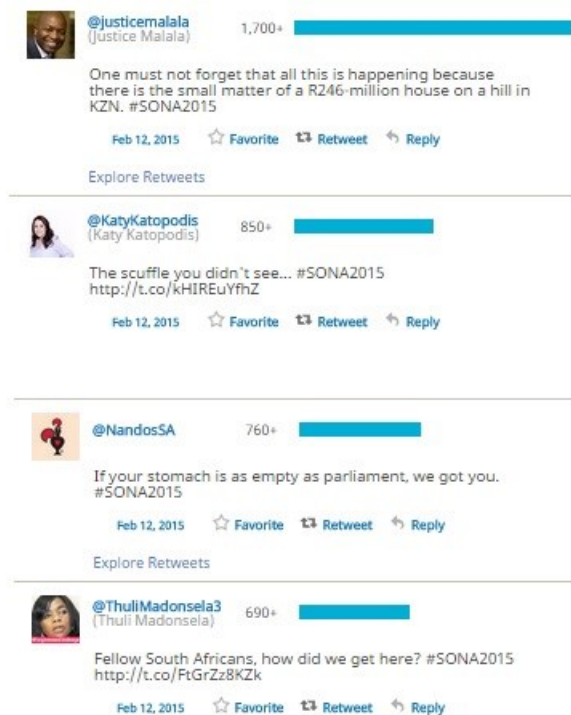
SONA 2015, [between 12 February 2015 and 16 February 2015](#), generated a total of 393,735 mentions which were largely generated during the president's address. Most of the mentions (342,000) were generated on 12 February with the majority spiking between 19:00 and 20:00. This is also indicative of the influence traditional media still hold over social media conversations.

*SONA 2015 Volume (on the day of SONA 2015):*



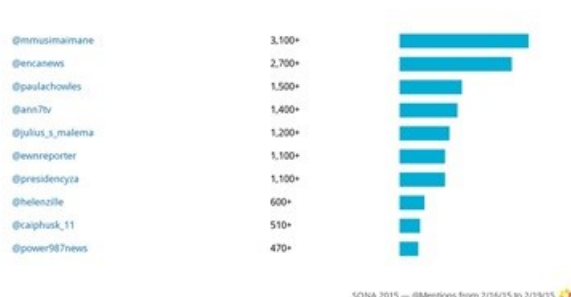
The most retweeted users on the evening of the president's address were Justice Malala, Katy Katopodis and Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela whose mentions generated between over 690 to over 1,700 retweets per individual. Nando's also emerged with their blend of humorous messaging as the only consumer brand amongst the top four most influential Twitter accounts in the SONA 2015 discussion. They managed to attract over 760 retweets with their irreverent tweet during the address.

*Most retweeted on the day of SONA 2015:*



Following the president's address, Mmusi Maimane led the SONA Debate and SONA reply conversations and mentions. His response saying the president is "a broken man, presiding over a broken society" led him to being the top most mentioned Twitter user with his Twitter handle (@MmusiMaimane) being referenced over 3,100 times.

*Twitter Metrics for #SONADebate and #SONAReply of the most mentioned accounts in posts:*



The SONA 2015 research from the pre to post SONA 2015 [social media coverage](#) shows how much social media activity continues to grow, especially on social and political issues. The South African social media public seems to have gravitated towards to newer players in the debate. The accounts of The Presidency and @My\_ANC were the most consistent for the same period in 2014, but @MmusiMaimane along with @Julius\_S\_Malema and the EFF were the seemingly the most active in 2015.

For a detailed look at the #SONA2015 and related social media research please [download the infographic here](#).

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#### MEDIA CONTACTS:

Mongezi Mtati, Marketing Manager at Ornico Group

Mobile: +27 83 757 3163

Landline: +27 11 884 5041

Email: [mongezim@ornicogroup.co.za](mailto:mongezim@ornicogroup.co.za)

Twitter: [@Mongezi](https://twitter.com/Mongezi)

ORESTI PATRICIOS, CEO at Ornico Group

Mobile: +27 83 326 2250

Landline: +2711 884 5041

Email: [oresti@ornicogroup.co.za](mailto:oresti@ornicogroup.co.za)

Twitter: [@Orestaki](https://twitter.com/Orestaki)

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