Abstract. The main theoretical focus of the paper is to formulate some of the patterns characterizing the construction of individual and collective identities (that extends individual and self) in virtual communities within Twitter communication. After a concise review of main theoretical approaches and methodological frameworks related to empirical data, we are exploring a large set of Twitter messages referring to Latvian parliamentary elections of 2010 and 2011. As our empirical data we have used a large-scale Twitter corpus (in Latvian) harvested and statistically evaluated using the Pointwise Mutual Information (PMI) algorithm and complemented with qualitative and quantitative content analysis. Instead of attempting to cover all Twitter discourse, an emphasis is given to journalists, politicians, public relations specialists serving as opinion leaders in Twitter communication.

Keywords: Twitter, virtual identity, political messages.