

# Can you do the SONA?

By Louise Marsland

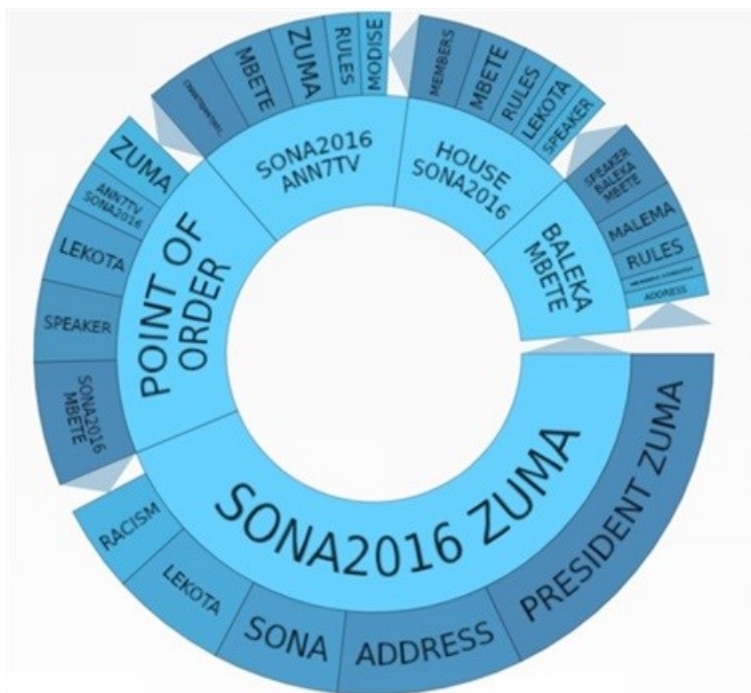
12 Feb 2016

From a new song and dance from the EFF, to marketing memes and new social media records, #SONA2016 was a riot - thankfully only figuratively speaking, this year.

One of the most exciting things technology can do these days is to track sentiment around a key issue in the public domain, such as the State of the Nation address last night, giving instant feedback.

YouKnow Digital, which was tracking the conversation, said social media interaction around #SONA2016 increased by 35% "with a whopping 345,964 on-topic conversations on the day. Compared to general social media conversation growth of 4.9%, this was a significant achievement."

The single biggest topic was 'Point of Order' between 7pm-8pm before the President was able to continue his speech. "The biggest topic of interest from the speech for the social media community was the drought on 25% (dominated by comments on government's inaction); followed by racism and the 'one capital city' discussion, both on 23%. Interestingly, while education was a big topic coming in to SONA2016, it was only the 4th largest point of online discussion during the address itself," reported YouKnow in a press release.



BrandsEye was monitoring social media chatter and reported that over 25% of [#ZuptaMustFall](#) conversation was explicitly negative towards the President.

“ Over 35 000 [#Tweets](#) captured by our systems in the first 30 minutes of [#SONA2016](#)!— BrandsEye (@brandseye) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

“ Nearly 7000 people using [#ZuptaMustFall](#) since the [#EFF](#) left parliament [pic.twitter.com/FnZPD3hcIX](#)— BrandsEye (@brandseye) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

“ .@JonoBKirk Today's number of [#SONA2016](#) Tweets, by hour [pic.twitter.com/mBw7CQhR0c](https://pic.twitter.com/mBw7CQhR0c)— BrandsEye (@brandseye) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

## When the going gets tough

Despite the terrible drought, political turmoil and bleak economic outlook, what will save us as South Africans is our unique sense of humour. The fact that we can laugh at ourselves, share the joke and, even despite bitter cynicism, move on to get things done.

Last night was no different and the memes flowed fast and furious, politicians on the night giving ample fodder, of course, as politicians the world over tend to do.

“ From the people who brought you [#PayBackTheMoney](#) comes the brand new smash hit of 2016 ... [#ZuptaMustFall](#).— Deep Fried Man (@DeepFriedMan) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

Did you know we have a new dance? We'll just call it the SONA for now. When the EFF, led by Julius Malema, started to chant [#Zuptamustgo](#) [#Zuptamustgo](#) (yes, we see the clever play on words there), before they left Parliament after being encouraged to do so by Speaker Baleka Mbete, one of the TV sign-language interpreters became an inadvertent superstar with her repetitive interpretation which she added a beat too, before exiting the screen when it seemed she started to laugh – like the rest watching her. It was a classic television moment.

“ The lady doing sign language was enjoying her job... [#SONA2016](#) [pic.twitter.com/B54nLEv0DS](https://pic.twitter.com/B54nLEv0DS)— Mohamed Nanabhay (@mohamed) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

So can you do the SONA? I predict it will be as popular on South African dance floors and streets in 2016 as the Macarena (back in my day) and the more recent and dreadful Gangnam Style. Musical interludes to follow no doubt from various comedians.

As for the brands, most wouldn't dare in these sensitive times, but luckily we have Nando's and Zanews to give us a chuckle.

Satirical site Zanews led the charge with their punt for Rescue Remedy before [#SONA2016](#) kicked off.

“ Entire Country Urged To Take Rescue Remedy Before Watching State of the Nation <https://t.co/wdJybrFZv> [#SONA2016](#) [pic.twitter.com/szFtRq4ZIK](https://pic.twitter.com/szFtRq4ZIK)— ZANEWS (@zanews) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

And during the ruckus, Nando's released a couple of posters which were widely shared and as usual, were pretty spicy, tapping into the mood of the moment as great brands have the courage to do.

“ Nando's has EFF like chill! [#SONA2016 pic.twitter.com/3t0QCY26Q4](#)— Siv Ngesi (@iamSivN) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

And then of course our resident comedians on the Twittiverse, us ordinary South Africans, contributed to the levity, making a tense night tolerable. And thankfully, unlike last year, there was no violence inside the hallowed halls of Parliament, just poor politicking and promises.

The initial run up to #SONA2016, complete with skirmishes in the streets and a 'Point of Order' process inside Parliament in the lead up to the President's speech, took longer than a Disney movie (Trust me, I tested this personally).

“ Set my 4-yr-old up in the next room with a Disney movie on my laptop because [#SONA2016](#) be like PG16 'SNVL'— Louise Marsland (@Louise\_Marsland) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

And my vote for the best commentary on the whole day, comes from an update from a News24 reporter on the clashes between the ANC and EFF on the mean streets of Cape Town, prior to the opening of Parliament formalities, where traditional 'Cape slogans' were shouted at Police by some protestors. Impeccable translation from the local dialect and use of punctuation I thought.

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15:20 - Angry protesters have shouted words of fury and frustration at riot cops, with some referring to police officers' mothers' genitalia.

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But basically, it was all over by 8pm when the EFF walked out, Cope having staged their walk out about half an hour prior, and the President got on with his #SONA2016, albeit with regular heckling from the remaining opposition.

“ I think EFF & Cope had 8pm dinner reservations. We all know [#CapeTown](#)'s restaurants are world class [#SONA2016](#)— Louise Marsland (@Louise\_Marsland) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

Here's a collection of some of the most retweeted and funny memes that arose during the pre-SONA 'debates'.

“ All quiet as South Africa settles down to watch its most cringe-making soapie. One episode a year, but oh so good! [#SONA2016 #Zuma](#)— Justice Malala (@justicemalala) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

“ Any journo at [#SONA2016](#) who gushes over an outfit should immediately be put down and then join a marketing company.— David Moseley (@david\_moseley) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

But it was Thuli Madonsela's night and her quiet victory walk in which she let her bright yellow dress do the talking, did not go unnoticed – over 300 tweets when she hit the red carpet, initially, says BrandsEye!

“ Madam Public Protector looks like she's about to twirl around the red carpet and sing: Let it go... [#SONA2016 pic.twitter.com/MDO9P0Dvbt](#)— Ranjeni Munusamy (@RanjeniM) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

Although the usual fashion parade was muted during these times of economic austerity and there was none of the usual fanfare and focus on fashion.

“ [#SONA2016](#) is not abt 21 Gun salutes & ridiculous costumes tht make a mockery of the majority [#SA](#) tht lives in poverty. U are there 2 serve.— Jay Naidoo (@Jay\_Naidoo) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

“ Let's hope our [#Parliament](#) still remembers why we fought for freedom & not disgrace our founding father.  
[#SONA2016](#) [pic.twitter.com/O62N88e4dP](#)— Jay Naidoo (@Jay\_Naidoo) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

“ [#SONA2016](#) [pic.twitter.com/m7D8RKWPCP](#)— Chris McEvoy (@ChrisMcEvoy\_) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

“ I have a new alarm clock

Honorable Speaker

Honorable Speaker

Honorable Speaker

Honorable Speaker

Honorable Speaker [#SONA2016](#)— SIA LEITA (@sialeita) [February 12, 2016](#) ”

“ [#SONA2016](#) South African's not wasting time on social media. [pic.twitter.com/PfKAj00fDf](#)— DeviSankareeGovender (@Devi\_SG) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

“ "Honourable speaker, you are winning awards now, please carry on like that." - Juju is riot !!!!

##### [#SONA2016](#)— Poppy Ntshongwana (@PoppyIsMyName) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

“ Break ups are rough [pic.twitter.com/WC94HTwnU6](#)— Mayi-stro-damus (@MTshwete) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

And let's not forget the serious business of [#SONA2016](#).

“ Real meaning of Zuma's speech? RT [@sumitranydoo](#): This speech is for the ratings agencies; pulling out all the stops to avoid a downgrade— Geoffrey York (@geoffreyyork) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

“ Now we know what Pravin Gordhan's comeback condition was: I write the [#SONA2016](#) speech, chief.— Adriaan Basson (@AdriaanBasson) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

“ This speech is for the ratings agencies [#SONA2016](#) pulling out all the stops to avoid a downgrade— Sumitra Nydoo (@sumitranydoo) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

[#SONA2016](#) gave us a few laughs this year, if not much else, but at least it wasn't the shock and horror of last year's brutal removal of opposition parties. It may be a difficult year, but it will, as usual, be a very interesting one.

“ That is how you win parliament in 2016 - clip of the night, slogan of the night, cameras on you as the Pres. resumes [https://t.co/JX70MWRXhz](#)— Nicholas Dawes (@NicDawes) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

“ [#SONA2016](#) Never feed a baby dragon. It will grow up and breathe fire all over you.— Elinor Sisulu (@ElinorSisulu) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

“ "Sit down Mr. Gupta!"

#####

WE WERE NEVER READY!

##### [#SONA2016](#)— Angel Campey (@YesReallyAngel) [February 11, 2016](#) ”

“ It might look noisy, chaotic and ugly but this is democracy. [#SONA2016](#)— Trevor Ncube (@TrevorNcube) [February](#)

[11, 2016](#) ”

## ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

Louise Burgers (previously Marsland) is Founder/Content Director: SOURCE Content Marketing Agency. Louise is a Writer, Publisher, Editor, Content Strategist, Content/Media Trainer. She has written about consumer trends, brands, branding, media, marketing and the advertising communications industry in SA and across Africa, for over 20 years, notably, as previous Africa Editor: Bizcommunity.com; Editor: Bizcommunity Media/Marketing SA; Editor-in-Chief: AdVantage magazine; Editor: Marketing Mx magazine; Editor: Progressive Retailing magazine; Editor: BusinessBrief magazine; Editor: FMOG Files newsletter. Web: [www.sourceagency.co.za](http://www.sourceagency.co.za).

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