

Focus group project



Given the apparent importance of social interaction, current researchers had endeavored to study political opinions (Adamic & Glance 2) to evaluation of the conversational quality characteristics of web blogs (Herring et al). Yet the usual researches cover analysis of the demographics of bloggers, content analysis of the bloggers' messages (Brandes 163-177) and some web blogging systems (Gu et al). Hence, the research of the aspects underlying the continual user activity would present a significant setting for future research. Research Problem

How are the number and nature of social ties related to people's willingness to continue contributing content to a weblog? Research Objectives (1) To analyze the conversational nature of weblogs (Herring et al) (2) To analyze various focuses on the relationship between social ties and continued activity (3) To examine the nature of social links contained within the weblog medium Rationale Since the popularity of weblogs soared, the interaction between bloggers has become a point of study of web developers, researchers and users.

Services that promotes enhancement of interaction for instance Facebook, Friendster and the like had constructed various options that utilizes web blogging systems that offers content sharing. At the same time, researchers had endeavored to analyze the correlation in reference to the collection of web blogs and finding out the social relations amidst the web bloggers. Yet, researches had failed to examine the nature of the social networks that is included in the web blog system.

Still, trying to comprehend the reason why individuals upload content to their web blogs and why some individuals after months or years later still continue

to post their blogs. Moreover, current researches had evaluated the motives of web blogging through content analysis (Herring et al) and interviews (Nardi et al 41-49). These researches discovered that web bloggers desired to share knowledge, express themselves and their point of views, and/or become part of a web community that they all preferred.

Conversely, this study endeavors to tackle the social linkages between the web bloggers and how they influence the decisions of the individual to take part. Methodology For this study, we implemented a focus group study method of research. The group would be facilitated by a group moderator which is one of the researchers, who would introduce the research topic, the objectives of the study, and motivate the participants to join in a lively and natural discussion.

In addition, an observer would take notes of the key issues that would be brought about in the session and other factors that possibly had an effect in the interpretation of the data. In five weeks the focus group discussion (FGD) will be implemented which is just enough time to provide rich data. The regression model that will be employed would include individual information or demographics that would explore the measurement of their activities and language group association.

The FGDs would be conducted in a conversational manner and would take up a pre-designed set of questions regarding the participants' background, blogs and their habits in blogging, perceptions on blogging, and their utilization of other communication media. Most of the respondents would undergo the FGD twice and would be invited through phone calls and email. Their blog postings would be analyzed qualitative and quantitatively. The

group would be informed of the schedule and additional objectives of the FGD through a class blog that the researchers had created specifically for the study.

Fifty individuals (25 men and 25 women), ranging from nineteen to sixty years would undergo the FGD. They would be divided into four groups every meeting. They all lived in California or New York and came from diverse countries or ethnic origin. They had at least finished secondary schools, from middle income family, both employed and unemployed. These participants used diverse blogging tools such as Blogger, Facebook, Twitter, Friendster, Xanga, and customized scripts. Most of them started with Blogger however when they gained experience in web systems they switched to more sophisticated social networking tools or created their own.

In the preparation of the guide questions, the questions must be based on the research problem. Questions must include a few whys and many hows, under what conditions, and related prodding would effectively facilitate discussion. And with regards to the set of questions, the moderator would deliver the predesigned questionnaires through open-ended questions that would elicit response but not limited to a mere answering of " yes" and/or " no. " the moderators should be also careful not to imply what is right or wrong answers and be sensitive enough to deliver his questions wherein the participants would not feel embarrassed nor guilty.

In recording the FGD, taking down notes and use of tape or video recorders would be utilized. Afterwards, the moderator and the observer would compile the notes and observations together. They should only take note of the manifest observations and answers from the respondents. Analysis Once

every FGD session was done, the data would be transcribed and organized in a clear manner. One of the researchers would transcribe both the audio of the video and the visual observations of the video recordings.

Another researcher would transcribe the recordings of the tape recorder. Another researcher would focus on the organizing of all the transcribed data. And another would analyze and interpret all the transcribed data upon the primary analysis of the logistic regression model used. They are to be aware that the probability of the continued partaking of the respondents in the discussion would interpret multivariate regression results. Thus they have to calculate the coefficient of each variable upon the conditioning of other variables.

Moreover, the frequency counts of the respondents' commonly used words and phrases, would be categorized and put together according to their similar ideas. Also, all through the analysis of the texts, the researcher should think about the context, internal consistency, in addition to specificity of the responses. They should take note that (1) detailed and direct responses are better than vague ones, and (2) those responses that are based on personal experiences are better than those that are based on hearsay, synthesis or opinions. Evaluation

In reference to the results of the study it had shown that several participants said that they blogged because of the benefits of utilization of a computer rather than paper (for instance typing is easier, faster and more recognizable compared to writing by hand recently. Using computer also has advantage of easy document editing and management tools. Furthermore, their web posts were easily accessed, stored, published, retrieved or erased any time and

any where. They are very much aware that their blog message could be read by a vast number of audiences owing to the World Wide Web.

Yet, they were a lot of them who were not concerned about privacy issues. In addition, only one respondent had a private, password-protected blog and messaging options (the blog is only open for his family and friends and contains pictures of his loved ones). They are also aware that they have an option to restrict the content to themselves and to their chosen social networks. Nonetheless, based on the study restrictions to their blog contents were rarely done. One of the findings had explained that the reason such web behavior is that although their close friends would find that interesting others do not.

Moreover, the content of most blogs of the respondents shows high level of diversity even though the sample is still very few. The study also portrayed that web blogs are usually utilized for documenting the respondents' daily life, activities, family, events, information dissemination, expression of point of views and commentaries on a specific topic, marketing of products owing to the advertisements posted beside the web blogs and sharing of other online activities such as online games, tests and others. The blogs are usually a mix of funny commentaries to thought-provoking revelations.

Also, in the study bloggers brought up blog topics from other blog thread and/or networks that they had seen. And most of their blogs are linked to other blog systems, instant messages profiles or homepage which is theirs, their friends,' family members,' colleagues et cetera. Most of the bloggers who took part in the study had “ blogrolled” or partake in scanning interesting blog topics that they needed at that point in time. Most of them

also posted multiples times in a day yet there were others who posted once in a month. There were also bloggers who had expressed their deep thoughts and feelings online.

Still, there were others who had experienced a “ blog burnout” and had stopped blogging either for long or short periods. And some of these “ blog burnout” respondents had returned to blogging after awhile. Discussion/interpretation Even though there were lots of researches on blogging, the study endeavored to focus on the blogging as an object-oriented communicative activity that enacts an extensive range of social aims. It can be surmised that blogs is like any communication media that can broadcast messages of their own at their own place and time and devoid of interruption.

And just like listener call-in radio stations, blogs have a limited feedback with regards to its commentaries. The message in the blogs has a character of being compliant to the original topic which is the same thing as in television talk show hosts or disc jockey on the radio. Typically, the bloggers are enthusiasts of previous blog topics and typically comments on the forums. However, most of then have low level of attention thus they transfer to another topic or forums. And just like in other communication mediums, they may tackle wide-ranging topics.

However, unlike the radio, the thoughts and feelings that were prompted by blog posts can be relayed through other media. Most likely, this is due to the fact that the respondents have wide social networks that transcend beyond a lone communication media. This way they can provide personal links that continue the interaction. Moreover, up until this study, it is still too early to

say that blogging is a communication “ genre” already (Herring et al). at the same time typical blog formats portrays genre conventions, the particularly varied substance of the blog posts would appear to fracture the boundaries of a particular genre.

For instance, in a textual analysis of one hundred twenty-five random blogs, Halavais [7] observed, “ I cannot think of another corpus that would be as eclectic as the text collected from these blogs. ” The research however was tremendously different in substance, despite the fact that it covered only fifty bloggers, within a fairly uniform group of middle class people, most in and around the state of California and New York. The research also leads the team to consider that blogging is as much about reading as writing, or as much about listening as talking.

The researchers also focused on the creation of the blogs, the demography of blog readers, assess the link between blog writers and blog readers. Moreover, the format type of blog as being diary-like can generate attraction for readers. At this month, the researchers were reminded of the medieval chronicles of the renegade activities of the illiterate adventurer Lope de Aguirre, which written by a number of of his men as Aguirre pillaged his way through parts of the New World. The said “ diaristic” accounts were as collectively embed as blogs, highlighted by the requirement to maintain the good side of the deceitful Aguirre.

Also, through the chroniclers’ notions of what would call to their audiences. One blogger enticed his readers with...“[Here] you will find cruelty, passion, and incidents arousing great pity” (quoted in [Minta 74-77]). And bloggers are just as cognizant of its potential and limitations which was established by a

range of readers as the chroniclers of yore. Herring et al. described the “hybrid” character of blogs, and that the relationships of previous forums are continual. Furthermore, the researchers found out that there was a limited interactivity characteristic of the blogging experience.

We can simply look back at those times when interactive technologies—telephone, instant messaging (IM), email, listservs, chat, MOOs and MUDs—that at the end of the day has constructed an excessive interaction. The researchers assume that most probably blogging is used to think by writing, to speak out and recommend. At the same time, blogs has these unwritten rules of good behavior, although it is not universal, but it can be employed for blogs that appear very diverse from the email. Limitation Future research will certainly employ same topics greatly than what the researchers have been able to here.

Use of a more sophisticated network statistics and innovative focus group discussion techniques may result different results. References: Adamic, Lada and Glance, Natalie. “ The Political Blogosphere and the 2004 U. S. Election: Divided They Blog. ” Proceedings of the WWW2005 Conference's 2nd Annual Workshop on the Weblogging Ecosystem: Aggregation, Analysis, and Dynamics. 4 March 2005. <http://www.blogpulse.com/papers/2005/AdamicGlanceBlogWWW.pdf> Brandes, U. “ A Faster Algorithm for Betweenness Centrality. ” 2001. Journal of Mathematical Sociology Volume 25(2): 163-177.

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