Social Penetration Theory and Facebook

Presented by

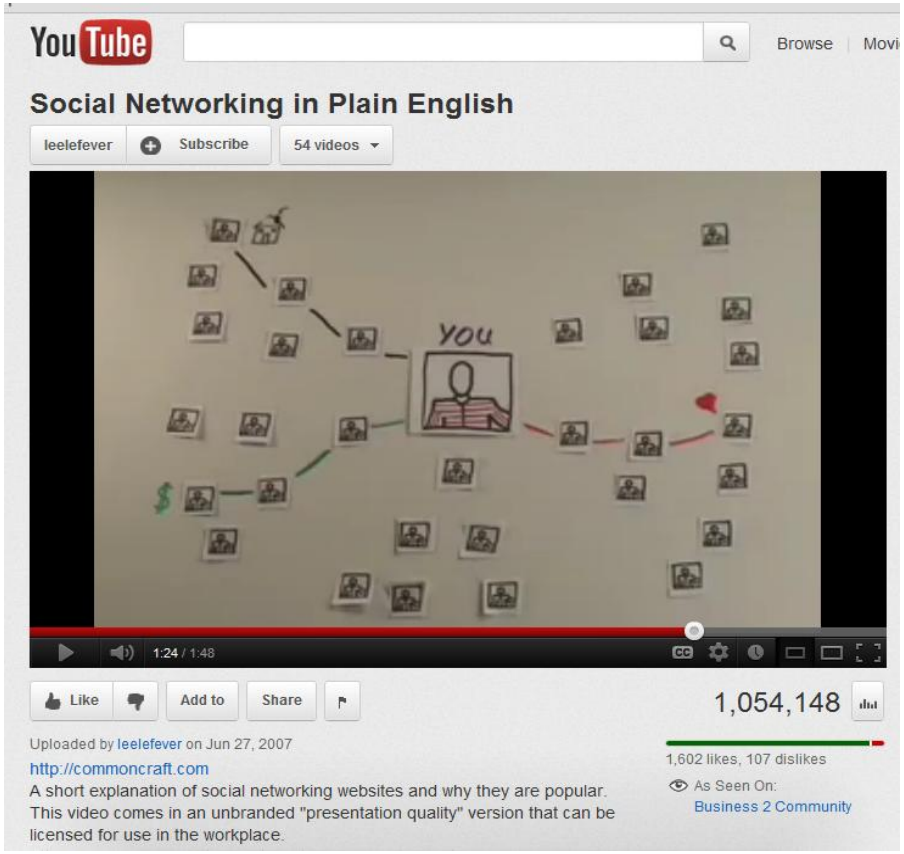
Annie McCarthy

CO 400

Fairfield University

April 22, 2009

Social Networking in Plain English



tinyurl.com/socnetworkplain or youtube.com/watch?v=6a_KF7TYKVc

Relationships from networks

- Users form relationships with each other in social networking online groups
- Relationships can be symmetrical which is influence balanced; or asymmetrical, where one party has more influence than the other
- Networks are dynamic, and are in a constant state of emergence, growth, maintenance and decline.
- Relationships are caused by interactions and mutual understandings.
  - Relationships are both social and personal, each side is constantly updating, thinking, communicating, etc., until one discovers what the relationships means, or an affirmation occurs.
- One's perception is not necessarily true of another's in any given relationship.
  - In my research I found that relationships can be compared to games and relationships are evaluated in a process, reconsidered, and the thought process leads to thinking about the future of the relationship.
- Social networks and relationships can also be seen as a pattern of behavior

Social Penetration Theory (SPT)

- Formulated by psychology professors Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor in 1973, to describe the dynamics of relational closeness
  - Relational closeness can progress from superficial to intimate. Closeness develops through self-disclosure.
- **Closeness varies according to the following factors:**

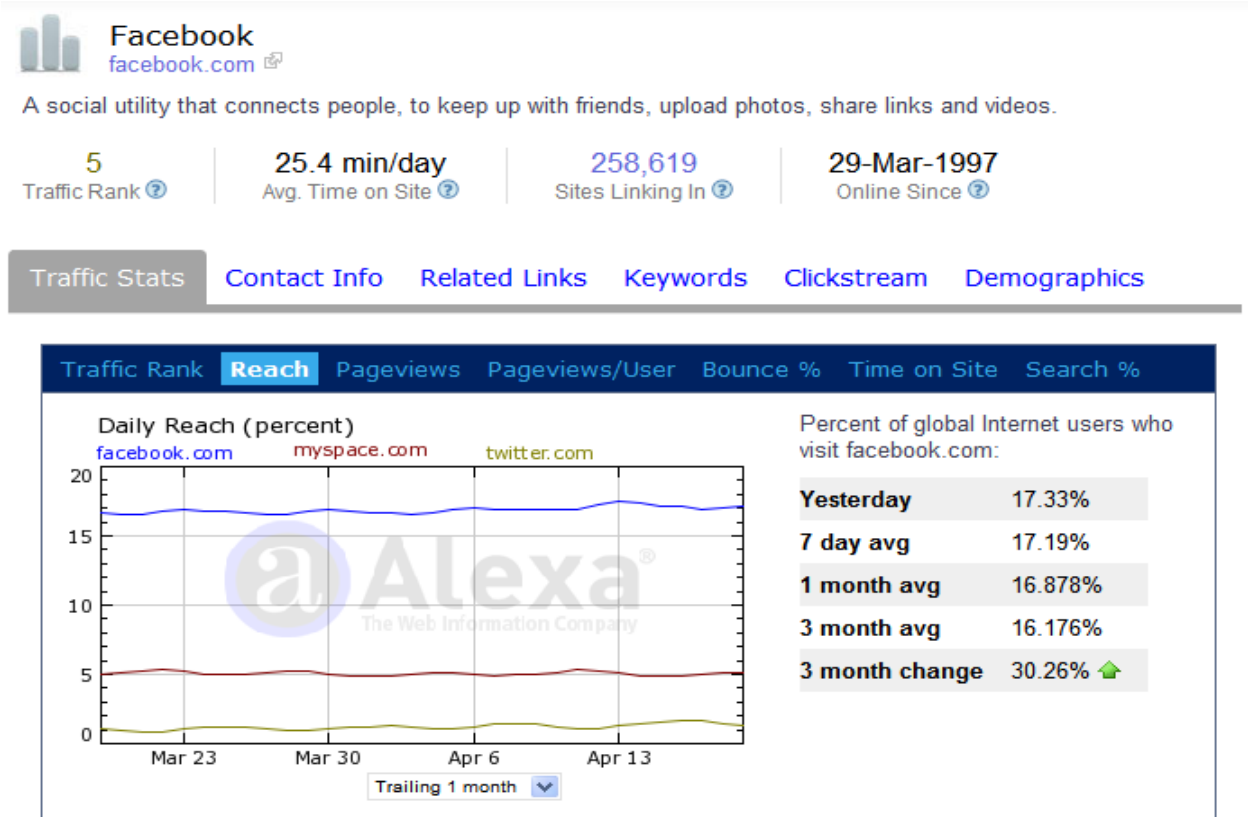
  Rewards/benefits; Costs/vulnerability; Satisfaction; Stability and security
- **Self-Disclosure Characteristics**
  - The story always represents the storyteller (the person disclosing). SD stimulates feedback. The quality of the feedback is related to the amount and relevance of self-disclosure we receive and share with others. Self-disclosure can be very revealing or not revealing.
- **Self-Disclosure Definitions**
  - Jourard (1971) defines self-disclosure as making ourselves "transparent" to others through our communication--i.e., when we tell others things about ourselves which help them to see our uniqueness as a human being.
  - Other definitions I found described the difference between self-description vs. self-disclosure. Self-description involves communication that levels "public layers" whereas self-disclosure involves communication that reveals more private, sensitive, and confidential information.
  - Pearce & Sharp (1973) make an interesting distinction among three related terms: Self-disclosure, confession, and revelation.
    - Self-disclosure – voluntarily communication of information about one's self to another.
    - Confession – forced or coerced communication of information about one's self to another.
    - Revelation – unintentional or inadvertent communication of information about one's self to another.

Nielsen top 10 parent sites- Feb. 2009

Parent	Unique Audience (000)	Time Per Person (hh:mm:ss)
1. Google	133,983	2:00:55
2. Microsoft	125,692	2:28:15
3. Yahoo!	114,130	3:27:19
4. AOL LLC	83,083	3:45:59
5. News Corp. Online	77,569	1:21:13
6. Facebook	65,704	2:59:54
7. InterActiveCorp	65,693	0:16:17
8. eBay	63,066	1:51:13
9. Amazon	59,389	0:24:33
10. Wikimedia Foundation	57,910	0:17:10

Source: http://en-us.nielsen.com/main/news/news_releases/2009/march/nielsen_online_provides

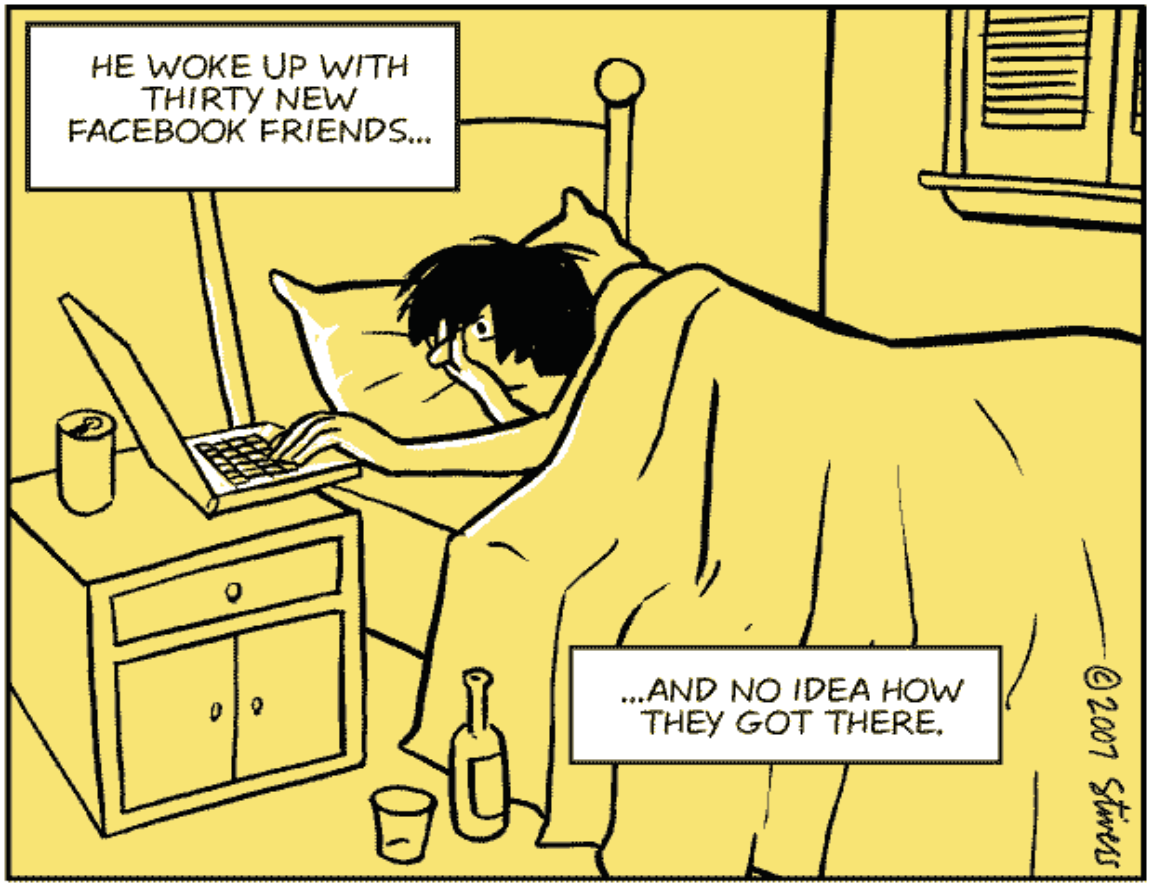
Popular SNS rankings- Alexa



Source: http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/facebook.com+myspace.com+twitter.com

What is Facebook?

Source: http://www.facebook.com


HE WOKE UP WITH THIRTY NEW FACEBOOK FRIENDS...
...AND NO IDEA HOW THEY GOT THERE.
©2007 Stinens

Facebook Statistics

General Growth	More than 200 million active users
	More than 100 million users log on to Facebook at least once each day
	More than two-thirds of Facebook users are outside of college
	The fastest growing demographic is those 35 years old and older
User Engagement	Average user has 120 friends on the site
	More than 3.5 billion minutes are spent on Facebook each day (worldwide)
	More than 20 million users update their statuses at least once each day
	More than 4 million users become fans of Pages each day
Applications	More than 850 million photos uploaded to the site each month
	More than 8 million videos uploaded each month
	More than 1 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photos, etc.) shared each week
	More than 2.5 million events created each month
	More than 25 million active user groups exist on the site
International Growth	More than 40 translations available on the site, with more than 50 in development
	About 70% of Facebook users are outside the United States

Source: http://www.facebook.com/facebook?ref=pf

"On Facebook, 273 people know I'm a dog.
The rest can only see my limited profile."

Source: http://jeffreyhill.typepad.com/.a/6a00d8341d417153ef0105362c512a970c-800wi

Future growth and other findings

Findings of Self Disclosure Research

- Disclosure increases with increased relational intimacy.
- Disclosure increases with the need to reduce uncertainty in a relationship.
- Disclosure tends to be reciprocal.
- Disclosure tends to be incremental.
- Disclosure tends to be symmetrical.
- Liking is related to positive disclosure, but not to negative ones.
- Positive disclosure does not necessarily increase with the intimacy of the relationship; but negative disclosure is directly related to the intimacy of the relationship.
- Relational satisfaction and disclosure have a curvilinear relationship -- satisfaction is highest with moderate levels of disclosure.
- By using Facebook and other social networking sites you grow relationships using self-disclosure.

Privacy concerns

• Virtual communities can bring users closer together to form relationships, and users are seemingly not concerned with privacy, but want to feel connected and make new "friends." Facebook users have tools available to protect their privacy, as users can restrict the accessibility of their profiles using a variety of means, particularly by restricting full profile viewing to their Facebook "friends" or friends of friends and networks.
• Social networking site users, especially college students in the U.S., have high connectivity levels, therefore offline identities carry over to online behavior, and vice versa. This can be seen today with users constantly updating their status on Facebook or Twitter, or RSVPing to event invitations on Facebook.

• We love to share, it is part of human interaction, and on social networking sites its fun and easy to do. What you share with "friends", who could be real friends, acquaintances, co-workers, or strangers, could potentially be for all to see globally. Websites do allow privacy settings and users are increasingly changing their privacy settings, or not posting content that could be potentially damaging to them, socially, or in the workplace if a friend on a social networking site like Facebook is their boss. \
• Although it may be common sense, a good rule of thumb is to not friend your boss or other people that could take offense to what you and your friends may be posting to your profile(s).

• Content on the internet never goes away; anything you say can and will be used against you.
• If you write something it's out there, and that's great if you want it to be, but you also need to be careful because everyone has access to it.
• Just Google yourself, or search pipl.com, and see what you find. If you're ok with what you find then you're on the right track.

Thank You!