Twitter

a new breed of social networking

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What is Twitter?

Twitter is a social networking/micro-blogging service, launched on October 2006 at http://www.twitter.com as a web application based around status.

Some basics about Twitter:

- Users can post tweets and interact with Twitter via:
  - SMS
  - Web
  - Instant message services
  - Third-party applications on the desktop and iPhone

Twitter affords other uses such as:

- Networking tool
- Newsfeed
- Advertising
- Instant messaging
- Blogging

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1. Methodology

Purpose of this study: Test if Twitter affords a new way of social networking.

Hypothesis considered:

A. Twitter users engage in a different type of communication

B. Twitter users maintain distinct relationships within the network

Both of these hypothesis were tested by comparing these two factors with the most common form of social networking on the Internet, the one that comes in the form of communities like Facebook, MySpace and such.

How: 1. ethnographic study based on participant observation, readings on Twitter 2. a structured online questionnaire involving 138 Twitter users

Some of the questions asked:

- Demographic questions: age, gender, occupation.
- Twitter usage: Time as a number of tweets, ventures of profile information, tweets per day and activity of Twitter.
- Hypothesis testing oriented questions:
  1. What portion of your Twitter friends do you frequently meet face-to-face?
  2. In terms of social networking features and functionality, Twitter is the same as...
  3. My friends on Twitter offer the same kind of social support as my friends on...
  4. I learn more frequently with my friends on Twitter than my friends on...
  5. I would close my friends on Twitter than my friends on...
  6. I would most likely engage in a conversation on Twitter than...

2. Results

Participants Origin

Occupation

Time on Twitter

Comparing Twitter with other networks to amount of social networking features in social media

3. Discussion

Facts supporting hypothesis A. Twitter users engage in a different type of communication.

- Tweets, status updates of @ Williams are the one and only form of communication that Twitter provides.
- Type of communication that is synchronous is its relative strength of communication, which is synchronous communication.
- Some of the users say that they communicate with friends 65% of the users use it as networking tool, 61% as announced, 58% as a way of promoting, 39% as instant messaging service
- Users also agreed they would most likely engage in a conversation on Twitter than any other of the networks in the following order: 27.4% strongly agreed, 8.1% agreed while 3% disagreed and 1% strongly disagree.

Facts supporting hypothesis B. Twitter users maintain distinct relationships within the network.

- When users were asked which percentage of their Twitter friends they frequently meet face-to-face, 9% and 10% were the most common answers, with 11% and 14% respectively.
- Users agreed (79% strongly and 8% just agreed versus 7% of neutral, 4.2% of disagreement and 1% of strong disagreement) they interact more frequently with their Twitter friends than any other of the networks in the following order: 27.4% strongly agreed, 8.1% agreed while 3% disagreed and 1% strongly disagree.

I agree with the fact that Twitter has its limitations, but the future is bright. There are already some interesting mashups using google maps and Twitter but with GPS coming to every mobile phone as camera obscura, Twitter has a huge advantage as location-based platform - while on the other hand is kind of strange to think of Twitter as this big band of people where your friends and followers are aware of both what you’re doing and where you’re doing it, on the other it’s definitely useful. Not to say that it would boost Twitter usage.