Speed or security in social media networks?

As social media online expands and encompasses the population of the whole world could physical technology limit the rapid expansion? There is a key concept in Computer Science that explains how memory is currently increasing more rapidly than speed, and this plays a big part in this question. The two scholarly articles that I will discuss specifically on this topic attempt to answer this question in two different forms. The paper on “Urban computing to bridge online and real-world social networks” by Vassilis Kostakos and Eamonn O’Neill attempts to depict a scenario where they demonstrate creation of a social network and their findings show the limitation in data that they had, and the other paper “Facebook Social Media Survey” by the Identity Theft Resource Center posed its security concerns on the increased creation of online profiles and its impact on memory and on tools like “Login with Facebook”.

The scholarly paper on “Urban computing to bridge online and real-world social networks” (Urban paper) takes data from the “real world and relate[s] it to the online data” (2) and its main goal is to try and visualize patterns and properties of the sample data set and to see if that data can be transformed into a simulation. This simulation will help us to conclude if the memory is a limiting factor in the creation of a network. The outcome of this paper showed that depending on the growth of a social network the data is going to be a limiting factor in its expansion as speed increases rapidly.

The scholarly paper on “Facebook Social Media” (Media paper) “[studies] ... the consequences suffered by users who had previously experienced Facebook account takeover” (1). Moreover, the reading states that as the dataset of our social networks gets larger and the speed increases the memory will be a limiting factor but this larger database would also lead to more vulnerabilities in data and security flaws. In addition, the addition of APIs (Application Protocol Interface), such as Facebook Login, introduces more vulnerabilities as now Facebook data is stored on multiple websites and it would be a lot easier to compromise non-Facebook websites than Facebook to get that data.

Primarily, both the scholarly papers support the claim that there is going to be a limiting factor in the growth of social media in the future, and that factor is memory. The Urban paper comments on this issue through the examination of “user’s behavior, and ... any software they may be using” (7), and this is significant because they took a sample dataset from about 400 users and the data suggests the rapid increase in the amount of memory people are using online. The data implies that there will be an increase in memory as individuals are increasing their use of software and social networking applications rapidly.

Moreover, the Media paper shows that “Facebook has 845 million monthly users [and] this widespread usage of Facebook means that a percentage of exposed users is quite substantial population to be preyed upon” (5). This indirectly references the fact that as the amount of users grows, it becomes harder to manage the amount of memory required in order to deal with the individuals and it’s easier to deal with speed. Dealing with speed is easier because there are more people working on making the site more efficient than there are working on managing every part of the databases and it also becomes extremely hard to alter database queries when there are 1,000’s of queries being written per second.

However, the focus of the Media paper is more towards security as a pose to the Urban paper, which concentrates on the creation of a social network and the data they get. The premise of the Media paper is that more and more people are choosing to login through their Facebook accounts on other websites because it is faster to do so. The scholarly paper argues that “identity theft has rose 12.6% in 2011” (1), and one reason why identity theft is easier nowadays is because people are willing to ‘Sign in with Facebook’ on every website. Even though it becomes a centralized platform for people to login with on every website people use it also stores their basic information, such as their First/Last name, their profile picture, and also access to their friends into a local database. This information makes it very easy to gain knowledge about people as using their friend circle, first/last name, and picture could be used to get the address of the individual. Moreover, if their friends are also on the website it becomes even simpler as they could relate the two friend circles together and use the common information they have to locate them exact to a city or even a street through Yellow Pages, ect.

In conclusion, it brings up a question if security is more important or the speed that we access information with? Even though the current research shows that more individuals would rather be more efficient and save time accessing different websites than have to register separately for each site, most of them aren’t aware that there are negative effects of a centralized platform. Social networks are available to us as a way of communication between our peers and our friends and not to create a centralized platform because we don’t know what these external sites do with our information and we need to be careful as the internet is not something that is restricted but open to everyone freely, and there could be physical consequences for information give out virtually.

**Bibliography**

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