Software Studies – final synopsis

Why this topic?

The problem I want to state and to dig deeper in to is based on this quote from the text ”What Do Metrics Want? How Quantification Prescribes Social Interaction on Facebook”: ”Thus, within our system of capital, quantification becomes the way we evaluate whether our desire for more is being fulfilled. If our numbers are rising, our desire is met; if not, it remains unmet. Personal worth becomes synonymous with quantity.” After reading this text it becomes clear to me what these metrics on e.g. facebook want. Facebook’s platform is based on fulfilling their users desire for more. And this is the reason for choosing this topic. It interests me how addictive Facebook is, and therefore I would like to explore what this does to their users.

Problem setting

The main problem setting I will be addressing is the following question: What effect do all the quantitative data and how it’s displayed on facebook have on the users?

Course of action

First I will describe how Facebook put metrics on almost everything they can , and then look at how Facebook is perceived when there’s no numbers appearing on the webpage. By this I mean to see in what extend we are just liking, sharing and doing other things visible to other users just because of exactly that they are visible. And then on the other side, look at how facebook is perceived when the numbers don’t appear. And this is something Ben Grosser has got a lot of response on from when he made a demetricator plug-in that removes all metrics on facebook. This I will use Ben Grosser’s text for.

To supplement this text I will bring in the artwork by Ben Grosser called ”You like my like of your like of my status.” I think this artwork helps proving Grosser’s point about how liking everything has become a culture, and people need to like all the time to feel appreciated.

Then I would like to link the ”What Do Metrics Want? How Quantification Prescribes Social Interaction on Facebook” text to the ”Data visualization” text by Richard Wright. I especially find this quote good at explaining what e.g. facebook does: ” Conventionally, however, “data visualization” is understood as a mapping of digital data onto a visual image.” I can use this text to look at how the data visualization started and what others used it for before Facebook got as big as they did. I will probably try to find another text to complement this in a way, but this I’m not quite sure about yet. I just think it could be interesting with a historical look at data visualisation and then make a connection to my paper and facebook in general.

For the final part of the paper I will discuss facebook’s numbers in relation to what they do to people’s minds. The addictiveness, the desire for more and wasting some user’s lives if they get too addicted. For this I will bring in a text in the analyzing part of my paper that can give the paper a better understanding of the physical things happening when interacting with the facebook page.

Sources:

<https://www.theverge.com/2017/12/15/16781448/facebook-makes-you-feel-bad-study-research> - text on how Facebook has said that spending time on their newsfeed will result in a bad feeling about yourself. This is what facebook is all about. Making it addictive to get more interaction from their users so that they can sell and use their data.

”What Do Metrics Want? How Quantification Prescribes Social Interaction on Facebook” – Ben Grosser.

“Data visualization” – Richard Wright.

”You like my like of your like of my status.” – artwork by Ben Grosser.

https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2017/12/could-facebook-be-tried-for-war-crimes/548639/