

Social Computing Capstone

Day 9: Quantification

CSE 481p | Spring 2023

Guest Speaker: Jim Chen

Postdoc | University of Washington, Allen School of Computer Science & Engineering

Schedule for today's class

- Quantification:
 - Short lecture, discussion of reading (10 min)
 - Black Mirror Episode (10 min)
- Prep for Thursday prototype feedback session (2 min)
- Group work time (58 min)

Quantification

today's social media is full of numbers

followers

subscribers

click-through rate

likes

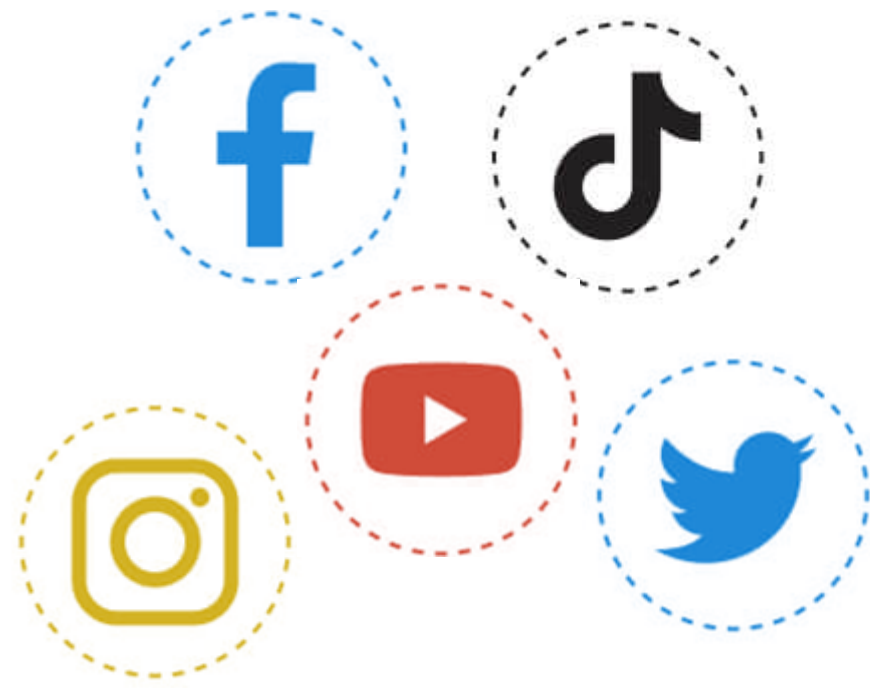
5-star ratings

number of
comments

views

We don't count things in offline social interactions.
So why so prevalent online?

...Quantification simplifies work for the decision maker



Platforms

- Rank content via algorithms
- Gauge reach of advertising
- ...



Creators

- Understand the feedback of their followers
- Compare their content
- ...



Users

- Get social signals from friends and strangers
- ...

The first step is to measure whatever can be easily measured. This is OK as far as it goes.

The second step is to disregard that which can't be easily measured or to give it an arbitrary quantitative value. This is artificial and misleading.

The third step is to presume that what can't be measured easily really isn't important. This is blindness.

The fourth step is to say that what can't be easily measured really doesn't exist. This is suicide.

— Daniel Yankelovich

When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure

— Goodhart's law

But what are the consequences of quantifying and monetizing our social experiences?

Nosedive (Black Mirror) Episode Excerpt

Discussion

- What are the consequences of quantifying and monetizing our social experiences?
 - Reading: Interview with Ezra Klein & C. Thi Nguyen
 - “Nosedive”
- Can you also think of benefits of quantification and monetization?
- Relate the experiences of the people in your readings to your own. Do you recognize any of their motivations, worries, or aspirations?
- How do these incentive structures at the individual level remake culture or society as a whole?
- Nosedive is eerie precisely because it feels entirely plausible (a “near-future dystopia”). Is the direction we’re headed inevitable? How could you change it?

Thursday's Prototype Feedback Session

This Thursday

Thursday's lecture will be about community moderation led by Galen Weld. There is one reading due: "The Lonely Work of Moderating Hacker News (Wiener, 2019)

After that, we'll dive into the prototype feedback session.

Reminder that G3 (low-fidelity prototype) is due and Parts A and B of the G3 report. The prototype(s) needs to be done and ready to go BEFORE class so that in class, each group can be paired with another group to actually playtest the prototype and give feedback. You can get additional feedback and play testing from people outside of class. Then turn in Part C of your G3 report by Tuesday.

Tips for Prototype Feedback Session

As mentioned in last class, you can make more than one “prototype”, including one fully faked implementation via an existing social system to answer social questions, and one that’s a paper prototype/Figma drawing to get feedback on any UI/user flow you intend to build.

You will have around 20-30 min for another team to playtest your prototype(s). **Make a plan for how it will go.** As part of the plan, you can **draft a script** for what you will say to your testers. You should also **write up questions** you want to ask the other team.

During the feedback session, **observe and take notes** on what people do, and also take notes on what people say (**ask people to speak aloud their thoughts!**).