Cameron Chandra

10/23/17

SI310/King

Midterm Write-Up

**Question One**

After reading articles gathered from a Google search of “leadership ambiguity”, three lessons were learned. First, leaders must pick their battles. When presented with ambiguous tasks, a leader must distinguish between complications and complexity. As Professor King explained in his paper, *Complications with Complexity in Requirements*, complicated problems can lead to successful solutions, while complex issues often result in failure (King 1). A poor leader delegates her followers to complex tasks, setting them up for failure. Effective leaders prioritize complicated problems in the face of ambiguity. Second, leaders must slow down when faced with ambiguity. In the information age, speed and action are valued. But, transforming ambiguity into something of value takes time, as Kevin Cashman of Forbes explains (Cashman). Amid ambiguity, Cashman urges leaders to take a “reflective pause” to move from the “hyperactive to the transformative” (Cashman). Jumping to conclusions signifies a poor leader. Lastly, there is a difference between leaders understanding ambiguity and leaders being ambiguous. A case study published by the Journal of Aerospace Science and Technology analyzed the way pilots combat ambiguity (Burrows-Mcelwain 1). In the cockpit, pilots cannot predict the weather conditions or whether the plane will function properly. Faced with this ambiguity, pilots must have a strategy for any unseen issues. But, pilots cannot communicate ambiguously. When disseminating information to air traffic control, flight attendants, or passengers, pilots must be clear with their message, even if they are surrounded by ambiguity. Leaders must not let the ambiguity surrounding their tasks leak into their communication with followers.

**Question Two**

The stakeholders in Facebook’s “fake news” issue are Facebook, the company and platform, the U.S. government, Facebook users, and hostile organizations purchasing advertisements on Facebook. Facebook users join the social network platform to consume information from their personal social network and organizations they relate to. Hostile organizations, the Islamic State and Russia in this case, purchase Facebook advertisements to push their agenda of spreading fake news. The U.S. government interests in this case is to protect U.S. citizens and prevent the spread of fake news. Facebook, the most important stakeholder, hopes to “amplify the good effects (of Facebook’s platform) and mitigate the bad (effects)…” as Facebook’s CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, claims. Organizations interested in spreading fake news presents a challenge to Facebook and the U.S. government, creating a conflict in both stakeholder’s pursuit of their respective interests.

Facebook’s infrastructure and its user’s requirements of the platform prevent the company from reducing the spread and consumption of fake news. Freedom of access to Facebook’s features and user’s freedom of speech within the platform are integral to Facebook’s infrastructure. Anyone can join the website and Facebook rarely censors the content produced by users. Therefore, “news” cannot be verified before it is shared to the platform, allowing fake news to spread. Also, advertisements are required in Facebook’s infrastructure. Without advertisements, the platform cannot generate revenue and the company cannot prosper. This is problematic, as Facebook struggles to filter the buyers of these ads. Hostile organizations, like Russia and the Islamic State, have purchased ads that push their agenda onto Facebook’s users. Facebook’s infrastructure inherently allows for the spread of fake news and user’s requirements of the platform prevent the company from changing the infrastructure.

The freedom of access in Facebook’s infrastructure prevents the U.S. from pursing their interests. America suspects that Russian organizations played a role in the election of President Donald Trump. These organizations, allegedly, inverted Facebook’s infrastructure to spread fake news that influenced the opinions of American voters. To cope with this threat, the U.S. government requires Facebook to filter this information and prevent Russian meddling with U.S. government processes. These requirements contradict both Facebook’s interest and Facebook users’ interest, as stated previously. So, Facebook’s infrastructure inherently places the company at odds with the U.S. government’s interests.

The conflict of interest between Facebook/Facebook users and the U.S. government is in a stalemate, allowing hostile organizations to push their agendas through “fake news”.

**Question Three**

Success in group work is a coordination problem. Individuals’ interests lie in the result of the group project, but their contribution is not necessarily a requirement. The most successful groups coordinate their contributions, with each member adding something to the finished product. But, groups that do not coordinate their contributions can, also, produce a successful project. Regulating the contributions of group members is the largest problem facing groups.

The free rider problem prevents a group from producing its best work, but does not necessarily render the group ineffective. The free rider problem occurs when members of the group do not contribute, but reap the benefits of the group’s success. Free riders do not add their perspective and ideas, both of which may improve the project. The perspective of others can raise neglected requirements and drastically impact the effectiveness of a project. Going into a group project, individuals understand this. If individuals know that their perspective can improve the project, why does the free rider problem still occur? In the end, individuals’ interests in a group project are the product’s evaluation. Groups experiencing the free rider problem can still produce a successful result. If some individuals in the group do not participate, the requirements of the project may be met by the individuals who do participate. Therefore, individuals have an incentive to conserve their energy and allow others to complete the project on their own.

A group that does not experience the free rider problem may encounter other issues, but these issues may increase the value of the final product. When all the members of a group contribute equally, opinions are bound to differ and conflict will occur. This conflict, however, is helpful to the group and will improve the project. Disagreement is common in group projects, but debate about these issues allows the group to better understand requirements and act on them. Conflict in ideas reduces the issue of “groupthink”. In group work, ideas are often passively agreed upon by members for the sake of harmony. This discourages creativity and contribution from other members of the group (that did not come up with the idea agreed upon). Groupthink, like the free rider problem, prevents a project from its optimal success. Disagreement and discussion remedies this problem. So, while conflict and disagreement seems like a problem in group work, it can often be beneficial to the final product.

**Question Four**

In this case, the UCDP is the most important stakeholder and their interest of gaining information from aggregated posts on social media platforms is the priority. But, it is important to consider the requirements of the other stakeholders, namely the individual social media platforms and the people who attended the party.

Social media platforms, like Tick Tock, Facebook, Twitter, etc., have different policies regarding disseminating information for police use. For example, Facebook “(discloses) account records solely in accordance with our terms of service and applicable law…” (“Information for Law Enforcement Authorities.”). To ensure the privacy of users, companies like Facebook cannot fully disclose account information, even if it may be useful in a police investigation. While Facebook has the responsibility of cooperating with law enforcement, they must also consider the requirements of their users. The case states that Tick Tock does not provide full information regarding posts. To most effectively gain useful information from Tick Tock, the agent must work with UCPD to collect as much information from the platform as possible, within the requirements of the social media company.

The students who attended the party are stakeholders as well, and their information may be the most useful in the investigation. While cooperating with the UCPD is not a requirement for the partygoers, the UCPD cops can conduct voluntary interviews. Investigators cannot require that these people share information, but students do not have an incentive to avoid cooperation and may offer help voluntarily. In fact, safety may be a requirement for partygoers in this case. Students want to help the police in this investigation so that they can feel safe on campus, especially at night. The UCPD should focus on these individuals, as they are the only people who saw the victim on the night of the incident. Agent’s should urge the UCPD to interview as many partygoers as possible, as their information is important and may help corroborate information gained from Tick Tock and other social media platforms.

To best aid the UCPD in their investigation, agents must aggregate as much information as possible from social media platforms like Tick Tock, as well as the students who attended the party. Because social media sites value the privacy of their users, disseminating account information is limited. Holes in that information can be filled by the recollection of partygoers, as they are the only eye witnesses.

**To:** Mathilde Finnegan-Kennel, Boss

**From:**  Cameron Chandra, Analyst

**Date:** 10/23/2017

**Subject:** Tradeoffs of anonymous social media sites

Ms. Finnegan-Kennel,

Users on anonymous social media platforms have different interests than those on non-anonymous platforms. Because anonymous social media users value their privacy more than they would on a non-anonymous platform, companies like Tick Tock and Yik Yak and required to protect the identities of their users. This requirement limits the amount of information law enforcement agents can consume during an investigation, but the information from the platforms that can be accessed must be considered.

First, the infrastructure of many anonymous social media platforms allows access to information for law enforcement purposes. Yik Yak, a popular anonymous platform on college campuses, can disclose certain information applicable to investigations. This information comes in the form of protocol addresses, GPS coordinates, phone numbers, and the date and time of posts (Ap). To create a Yik Yak account, users must provide basic information to authenticate the account (such as a phone number). Even though this violates the requirements of the platform, “Yik Yak tells police they must generally provide a subpoena… to obtain information about its users, but in an emergency the company may provide details without those legal instruments” (Ap). There have been multiple arrests in which evidence gathered through Yik Yak aided law enforcement during the investigation. So, while anonymous platforms inherently limit the information law enforcement agents can access, their infrastructure allows for some helpful information to be gathered.

The information gathered from posts on anonymous social media platforms must be critically analyzed before action can occur, as it is impossible to verify the accuracy of the information. Anonymity changes the quality of content on social media platforms. Non-anonymous social media users naturally censor their posts, as their identity is linked to everything they share. This idea implies that information on non-anonymous platforms has a better chance of being accurate than that of anonymous sites.

Based on this information, I recommend that anonymous social media platforms should be seriously considered in police investigations. While there are limits to the information gathered from these sites, the infrastructure of anonymous platforms has room for law enforcement agents to explore.

**Question Five**

“Humans of New York” (HONY) is an organization interested in sharing the stories of those who may not be able to do it themselves. Along with the organization itself, other stakeholders in this case are the readers consuming HONY’s content and the individuals interviewed by HONY. HONY have published a book, developed a website, and has a strong Facebook presence, so they have readers all over the world. HONY’s lack of formal requirements allows the organization to spread their content easily through their multiple platforms.

Even though HONY’s interviewees share personal information during the interviews, their identities are kept anonymous to maintain privacy. By making privacy a requirement, HONY can more easily spread interviewees’ stories without being concerned for their safety. While interviewees’ pictures are shared, HONY never writes out their full names, discloses addresses, or specifies where someone works, studies, etc. The infrastructure of Facebook and the organization’s website allows for anyone to access their content and that access is not filtered. So, without this requirement, the identities of the interviewees would be at risk. Negating this risk allows HONY to spread their stories around the world without negative consequences.

The Humans of New York website is simple, mimicking the simplicity of HONY’s mission. Other than some informational sections about the organization and project, the website is dedicated solely to peoples’ stories and images. I believe the simplicity of the website was a fitting choice, as HONY’s purpose is simple itself. HONY was created to share stories, from people whose stories you would not normally hear. The website does exactly that, with an easy to use interface that generates a plethora of stories on the homepage.

Reading through samples of HONY’s website, Facebook page, and book, it appears that the format on each platform are similar, if not identical. Again, HONY’s purpose is simple. The organization gained success via a specific formula: images and interviews of people in New York/other countries. So, there is no incentive for HONY to change their ways. Like the website, the Facebook page and book are simply formatted, highlighting the content of the interviews. HONY requires privacy for their interviewees and authenticity in their content. These are common requirements among all three of its platforms.

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