Session 19: Social Networks

Facebook now has the most page views of any site on the web, making it an apt symbol of the ubiquity and relevance of social computing. The digitization of social networks is not only creating new opportunities to do business on the web, but also providing management researchers with unprecedented insights in to phenomena like social "contagion". We'll learn a bit about these insights in today's class.

Please note that 1) the 1 page assignment for this session is cancelled and 2) I have added a new required reading, and several optional readings, all available via SSRN.

Readings

Required:

Lazer, D et al. (2009) "Computational Social Science" *Science*, Feb. 6, 2009.

Aral, Sinan, Brynjolfsson, Erik and Van Alstyne, Marshall W., "Harnessing the Digital Lens to Measure and Manage Information Work" Forthcoming in the *Communications of the ACM* (November 16, 2010). **Please download the paper from SSRN: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1709943**

Optional:

Aral, Sinan, Brynjolfsson, Erik and Van Alstyne, Marshall W., Information, Technology and Information Worker Productivity. Available at SSRN: http://ssrn.com/abstract=942310

Van Alstyne, Marshall W. and Brynjolfsson, Erik, Global Village or CyberBalkans: Modeling and Measuring the Integration of Electronic Communities. Management Science, Forthcoming. Available at SSRN: http://ssrn.com/abstract=756445

Aral, Sinan and Walker, Dylan, Creating Social Contagion Through Viral Product Design: A Randomized Trial of Peer Influence in Networks (July 30, 2010). Available at SSRN: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1564856

Study Questions

Please think about the following questions as you do the readings.

1) Do you spend much time using social networks? How has social networks changed your personal life? How about your professional life?

2) Advertising rates on social networks like Facebook remain very low. Why do you think this is? Is it an inherent characteristic, or can it be changed?
3) What are the three biggest business opportunities created by social networking?
4) Do you think digitization of social networks and improvements in search and filtering technologies are more likely to lead to a "global village", cyberbalkans", both, neither or something entirely different? Why?

One Page Assignment: <u>CANCELLED: ENJOY THE FREE TIME!</u>

15.567 The Economics of Information: Strategy, Structure and Pricing
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