

Government Applications of Social Media Networks and Communities

2010 HCIL Symposium Workshop, UMD

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Friday, May 28, 2010

Room 2110, CSIC Building, UMD Campus, College Park

Schedule

8:30 – 9:30am: *registration and continental breakfast*

9:30am: Introductions

10:00am: “Technology-Mediated Social Participation: Promoting a Research Agenda” Ben Shneiderman & Jenny Preece, *University of Maryland*

10:30am: “Enabling Citizen Mapping of Government Networks with NodeXL” - Marc Smith & Derek Hansen, *Connected Action and University of Maryland*

10:50am: Break

11:00am: “Open Government, Social Media, and Information Policy: Constraints and Barriers” - John Bertot, *University of Maryland*

11:20am: “New Approaches to Collecting Public Input Online” - Joe Pringle, *Forum One Communications*

11:40am: “Visualizing Social Data to Improve Diplomacy” - Leonard Lidov, *Morningside Analytics*

12:00 – 1:00pm: *lunch*

1:00pm: “Using New Media for Citizen Engagement: Experiences from the General Services Administration” - Leilani Martinez, *Center for New Media & Citizen Engagement, U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)*

1:30pm: “Supporting Lifelong Learning & Institutional Transformation with New Media” - Michael Edson, *Web and New Media Strategy, Smithsonian Institution*

1:50pm: “Says who? Legitimacy in Online Collective Action: Enthusiasts and Interest Groups in Wiki Government” - Scott Golder & Vladimir Barash, *Cornell University*

2:10pm: “From Research of Social Media to Socially Mediated Research” Natasa Milic-Frayling, *Microsoft Research, Cambridge UK*

2:30pm: Break

3:00pm: “Putting the Power of Open Science to the Task of Improving the Nation’s Health” - Bradford Hesse, *Health Comm & Informatics Research Branch, National Cancer Institute*

3:20pm: Wrap-up discussion

4:00pm: Depart

Technology-Mediated Social Participation: Promoting a Research Agenda

Jenny Preece and Ben Shneiderman, *University of Maryland*

With support from the National Science Foundation, we have run two research agenda-setting workshops that clarify how social media can address national priorities. The first, in Palo Alto, CA engaged companies and the second in the Washington, DC area reached out to government agencies. Our report will describe the national priorities that can be addressed, deep science theories, technology challenges, and scope of educational changes needed in K-12, universities, professional training, and citizen awareness.

Enabling Citizen Mapping of Government Networks with NodeXL

Marc Smith & Derek Hansen, *Connected Action Consulting Group and University of Maryland*

Social network analysis can serve as a powerful analysis and visualization method to understand connections between people and institutions. Until recently, only those with advanced degrees and technical know-how have been able to perform social network analysis. We will introduce NodeXL, a plugin for Excel 2007, that allows non-technical experts perform social network analysis, particularly of social media networks of interest. We will discuss applications of NodeXL to government data and social media initiatives.

Open Government, Social Media, and Information Policy: Constraints and Barriers

John Bertot, *University of Maryland*

Much movement and discussion surrounds the use of social media technologies by the federal government in order to create a more open, transparent, and participatory government. Since the inauguration of the Obama Administration, government agencies have been required to engage in open dialogs, create open government plans, and otherwise use a range of social media technologies. But these efforts belie an antiquated and contradictory information policy environment that hampers innovation and use of a range of participatory technologies by government agencies such as twitter, facebook, and YouTube. Though agencies currently are using these technologies, there are a number of policies (e.g., laws, memos, administrative code) that prevent agencies from truly engaging in innovative uses and practices through social media technologies. This presentation identifies selected policy conflicts and considerations that need resolution for federal government agencies to be able to successfully engage the use of participatory technologies.

New Approaches to Collecting Public Input Online

Joe Pringle, *Forum One Communications*

Federal government agencies are experimenting with social media, crowdsourcing, and other collaborative approaches to soliciting, collecting, and responding to public input. This includes everything from formal rulemaking comment collection to ideascapade events to online brainstorms such as USAID's recent Global Pulse event. Chris will highlight common online approaches to using social media and collaborative approaches for collecting input, provide some examples about who is doing what, what's working, what's not working, and why.

Visualizing Social Data to Improve Diplomacy

Leonard Lidov, *President, Morningside Analytics*

This talk will focus on how Dr. Lidov's firm, Morningside Analytics, uses data visualization to understand public diplomacy, both in and outside government. Morningside's signature "dot-maps" picturing "Attentive Clusters" in the blogosphere have been featured in the media and opened business development doors in DC (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124658422588090107.html>), but they are just one of several innovative approaches the firm uses to help clients understand how its network analyses can improve their understanding of how messages move in the online "Link Economy."

Using New Media for Citizen Engagement: Experiences from the General Services Administration

Leilani Martinez, *Center for New Media & Citizen Engagement, U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)*

This presentation will discuss several new media initiatives overseen by the Center for New Media & Citizen Engagement, part of the General Services Administration of the federal government. These will include discussions of developing tools, methods, and best practices related to using new media by government to engage citizens. Examples will include a citizen engagement tool used by 23 agencies to gather input for their open government plans, the Citizen Engagement Platform, and FedSpace, a secure intranet and collaborative workspace for government employees and contractors.

Supporting Lifelong Learning & Institutional Transformation with New Media

Michael Edson, *Director of Web and New Media Strategy, Smithsonian Institution*

The Smithsonian Institution's Web and New Media Strategy that talks about an updated digital experience, a new learning model that helps people with their "lifelong learning journeys," and the creation of a Smithsonian Commons—a new part of the Smithsonian's digital presence dedicated to stimulating learning, creation, and innovation through open access to Smithsonian research, collections and communities. This talk describes the commons concept in the context of 21st century knowledge creation and the methods and drivers of organizational change.

Says who? Legitimacy in Online Collective Action: Enthusiasts and Interest Groups in Wiki Government

Scott Golder and Vladimir Barash, *Cornell University*

With the expansion of the World Wide Web, online communities have emerged focused on government and civic activities. These communities allow a wide user base to participate in everything from election campaigns to opinion polls to the legislative process (by making it easier for individuals to interact with members of local, state and federal government). The emergence of these communities has led to a greater citizen participation but has also opened up new venues for special interest groups to sway public opinion. For instance, politically oriented communities (dailykos, the free republic) advertise links to popular opinion polls and encourage

their members to vote in such polls en masse, creating a cascade of skewed opinion. We explore the issues related to creating venues of open (often unregulated) online participation in the government process, and the role special interest groups play in these venues.

From Research of Social Media to Socially Mediated Research

Natasa Milic-Frayling, *Principal Researcher and Director of Research Partnership, Microsoft Research, Cambridge UK*

We are witnessing the ultimate assimilation of computing technology by the masses: millions of online users have adopted social media as part of their daily routine. At the same time, researchers are striving to understand the principles of sustaining social media and the implications the new practices have on research itself. In this presentation we discuss insights about two important aspects. First is the delicacy of social media design where seemingly small changes can cause a dramatic difference in the character of the online community. This applies to both UI features that facilitate interaction and the reward mechanism that administrators introduce to motivate specific behaviours. Second is the emergence of new methodologies that leverage the principles of social media. They are adopted by groups of individuals to achieve their common objectives. We illustrate how, for example, the issue of scale can be addressed through the use of games to mobilize a community of practice.

Putting the Power of Open Science to the Task of Improving the Nation's Health

Bradford Hesse, *Chief, Health Comm & Informatics Research Branch, National Cancer Institute*

Bradford (Brad) Hesse is Chief of the National Cancer Institute's Health Communication and Informatics Research Branch. For more than two decades, he has been conducting research in the interdisciplinary fields of health communication, health informatics, survey methodology, and user-centered computing. Since coming to the National Cancer Institute, Dr. Hesse has focused his energies on bringing the power of evidence-based health communication to bear on the problem of eliminating death and suffering from cancer. He continues to direct the Health Information National Trends Survey, a biennial general population survey aimed at monitoring the public's use of health information, and he serves a program director the Centers of Excellence in Cancer Communication Research.