The Dynamics of Mass Interaction

Alexae Stone

From this article, it appears like USEnet was pretty great and rare in its time. It appears to be like the newsgroup that we use everyday today. However, just like any other technology it had its downfalls. This appears to be mostly brought on by the user, but it is up to the developer to try to make these cases less prominent. Things like people posting off topic or just a few people dominating the message boards, leaving others input out of the message boards. This article is about trying to find the best way to promote these bonds user’s have and creating a way for user’s to share the most amount of information possible.

I think it is interesting that they found that only a small number of people were posting a large number of text. I feel like this is very similar to daily life. In class, or anywhere else in the world there are always those few who like to really get their word out and want others to always know what they are thinking. This obviously has translated over to the newsgroup world as well. It somewhat relates to Facebook, when you see others changing their status every 2 minutes so you know what they are doing constantly or if something happened in the news, you get their opinion. However, it differs in the fact that others can choose to ignore the information they put out to the world much more easily.

Another find that I found interesting was the idea that is hard to start a conversation in Usenet. Apparently 40% of all posts are single posts, meaning that no one bit on their conversational topic. I think that this is related to the fact that people like to hear themselves talk. So you start your own conversation if you have something you want to say, but it could be the fact that somebody else has already started the same conversation and you just didn’t read their post. I think these findings are really representative of some kind of idea similar to that.

I think it was strange that they thought longer postings would create more activity. I think people like to feel like they are having a conversation, somewhat, when in these spaces. They don’t want to sit around and read all of the long postings of others, but if they can get the just of their post in a smaller amount of text, they will be more prone to read it and understand what the others are talking about, rather than ignoring it all together. This was what the research showed in the end. Maybe at the time this article was written, they weren’t quite sure how the Internet would really be utilized. I would be interested to see if this research changed the way that people created these sites and started using chat groups. I believe that’s the trend today; people like to interact in real time and post shorter responses to create an atmosphere that is similar to a conversation. However, we do still have posts, but I feel like people do respond quickly and with a short response, similar to real life.
Becoming Wikipedian

Alexae Stone

The idea of Wikipedia taking over as a big research source is amazing. I think the article hits it on the head when describing how anyone can change these pages but yet it is considered a creditable source (sometimes). Though I think as students we have been asked to refrain from using Wikipedia, or just Wikipedia, in our papers. I agree with the paper that the idea of regular people editing the text can give us firsthand insight into the world, and allows us to show our knowledge. I know recently after any kind of phenomenon has occurred, the corresponding Wikipedia site is updated so quickly others around the world can find out what is occurring. It’s very amazing.

I feel like this article hit on a very good point, representing how I personally feel about Wikipedia as well. When you just use this article for research and never have edited, you feel like it is sort of an untouchable source, like you can’t change it. And then maybe you see some mistyped text or totally ridiculous comment on a page that couldn’t be from an encyclopedia writer. I think from the responses from their interviewees, they felt the same way. I think the article failed to mention the number of people who just don’t edit on the site due to this way of thinking. It seems like it would be difficult to find this group, but I assume they could touch on the topic, or at least mention it.

This article makes you feel good about our society. The fact that these people are willing to post on these articles without any recognition is amazing. I think if you look around anywhere in our society, it is tough to find people like this, though they are out there. I know myself, I don’t do things usually unless I know there will be some benefit to me or someone I know. I guess they get the feeling that they are helping the WHOLE community of users. Though it would be amazing to look in a newspaper article and see your work on the front page, being quoted. I would be interested to see how often this happens to just regular users and what kind of expertise they did actually have on the subject. Maybe some users do like the page for exemplary articles. To see your edit on that page would be an honor.

One thing that kind of stunned me was the community of the editors. I guess I would fit their study, but I assumed they just wrote and that was. I really like the idea of users exemplary work being shared with others. For Wikipedia to do this, I think it creates a bond between these people and they in return watch out for their pages. It’s a good way to create a sort of neighborhood crime watch.
Studying Cooperation and Conflict between Authors with history flow Visualizations

Alexae Stone

Like in the previous article, I think the idea of Wikipedia is amazing. Though I have not experienced, from the way the article describes it, the search of an article’s actual text changes is very difficult. Only the paragraph where the change occurred is shown, and you can only compare 2 different histories at once. They decided to create a history flow model that would allow users to see visually the updates to the page. It shows the growth of these pages between different users and also allows you to read the text that was changed in their edit. It seems like what has been discussed in class is apparent here, it shows us the things we may have already known but didn’t know it.

This model seems like it would be great for a psychologist to study. Humans working well together (or not working well, in the case of deleting pages) could be very interesting to learn from and what kind of subjects are working well. It could end up being two entirely different people that don’t get along in real life, but in the virtual world, not having those prejudices because they don’t know the other person, they agree on some of the edits made to these articles. I think what this project could include is the correlation between what edit is made on the page and what is said on that particular page’s “talk page”. This could bring up what kind of thing’s get people going: page deletions, edits, new additions? It would be a good addition to the history flow and text shown for the edit. Maybe if you select a certain time frame to see the edits, down in the corner the “talk page” is shown representing that time as well as well as a bit after to see their reactions to the page edit. Another interesting application of this product could be looking at the page’s history when something historically huge has just occurred pertaining to that article. It would be interesting to see the amount of huge postings to the page and see how quick people are to change others.

I think this article brings up the interesting idea before of community. Like mentioned in the previous article about Wikipedia, these people create neighborhood watch groups to keep an eye on certain pages they are knowledgable about. The article hits it on the head when it notes this as part of why Wikipedia has had such success. The idea of protecting what they have written and what is real keeps people on top of those making ridiculous edits. This history flow, in addition to receiving emails about edits, could keep those interested in certain pages on top of that sort of thing. It also might help them pin point the section of the change, since the change can point to the sentence instead of the just the paragraph with the change. I think all editors would love to see the timeline of their edits to a page and the collaboration with others. People like to see what they have done in general, and this is a great medium for that. I don’t think I know how to design something like Wikipedia, but it shows that they are doing something right with the community taking care of mass deletes in 2.8 minutes on average. The sense of community is there.