The Network Community – Write up

Alexae Stone

This paper is all about how social networks work. It relates how every day groups that others may see as just groups can also be treated as social networks. There are so many types of these different interactions that people have with one another but there are certain rules that each group tends to follow, which is something you tend to see in these social networks. They look at these networks as either personal communities or whole networks.

I think the social network circle shown in Figure 1.1 is very similar to things you see these days. It was created in the 1960’s, so it wasn’t based on the same online networks like we have today, but I think it really shows that there is a big connection between online connections and personal, offline connections. It shows that these ties you share in the real life can be carried over to online spaces but also how they can be totally different. I think the figure that is shown here is also very similar to some we have seen created in class. It’s interesting how people are always wanting to know how they and their networks intertwine. The paper notes how they have found that people who have larger social groups are less likely to get the common cold. These type of visualizations can show us these sort of interesting trends.

I think what these community visualizations can show us is the ties between our different groups. In one aspect, it allows you to see how your groups know other groups. Maybe this creates other opportunities for these groups to interact through you. I think it allows people to strengthen these friendships they have and allow users to join in on these ties. These common interests you have with others you may have not known you have in common with others.

I think it shows a societal trend in families from this study. The paper states that many of these families are not as supportive as they used to be. This study bases this to be the case partially due to the use of the Internet social networks. People spend a lot of time on these pages and this takes away from all of the social interactions you have in everyday life. I think that the paper is right in saying that we have frequently changing social networks. With the ease of travel and sharing interests with others, it is easy to always be finding new people, new interests and new ways of interacting.

Social networks are always changing and I think this paper shows it. People change and the way they interact is always changing. Some things go out of style, like how we’ve seen in previous papers like myspace turning into facebook. Visualizations help us see these kinds of trends that occur in these social spaces.
The Strength of Weak Ties – Write up

Alexae Stone

This paper is all about the ties that people share with one another. The main focus is how having a relationship through two different people can create another tie between those two friends. It is difficult/rare to have no interaction (between these two friends) when you spend so much time with both of them. The paper goes on to describe other ties people can share and complex diagrams to point these out.

I really like the knowledge you can gain from the drawings of the bridges that form between friends. It shows you the possibility of these friendships. I think it could be advanced through adding thickness of the lines based on time spent together, though I know he is trying to give us an idea of what is occurring. There is always room for improvement. I think the path length should be based on friendship level, as stated by the reviewer. But I think that the lines should be shorter for those who have a tighter friendship – they are represented as closer to you. Those with weak ties should be far apart. However, if there is a problem in collecting data for the weak ties, this could be an issue to see how weak the tie actually is.

I think it is true that when representing friendships within a social group that the lines of your closer friends should create a denser view on the map. And those with weaker ties should be represented as not as dense. It makes sense that those you are most interconnected with is seen as a darker color, more intense on the screen. I think it would be good to show contacts of contacts. It is also interesting to see what kind of relationships are present. It could be shown as a very zoomed out image if the amount of contacts got too large. I think also seeing who each individual contact is would be very important to this visualization.

I think the weak ties could be good for showing who you can better your friendships with. I find it interesting that users used it to find those to help them with job opportunities. But by widening your network, you don’t have to have all of these dense ties with people, its just not possible. I also think it makes sense that users would trust a person of authority more if they had ties with them, over someone they haven’t. I think it works like that in any condition.
This paper is all about social networks and what kind of visualizations work. It also goes through the history from the hand drawn visualizations to the computer drawn images we are used to today.

I think it’s interesting how similar the beginning visualizations of data are represented to that of today. I think a common feature is the ease of reading data. The first visualization creator, Moreno, started this trend when he created his first few visualizations represented with data of who knows who. He stated that he would never cross the lines of the points he was connecting. I think this is what needs to be done with all of our visualizations. It is about keeping things simple but also showing the user what they want to see. He also uses simple ideas through directed graphs to show in which direction the communication between people is going through the arrows.

From his work, people moved on to using the sociometric status of each point. It’s strange how all of this old work was done for actors/actresses. It is interesting to see how these visualizations have evolved to today’s where anyone can put their data into these web app’s and see their data displayed, whether it’s the most popular text or information from their facebook.

I love when the 3-d images are displayed. I think the visualizations have gotten so interesting over time with the use of computers. The visualization that shows people who studied a certain subject in Australia. I think it is with pieces similar to this that we can create pieces of art that actually represent data. You can create some of the most interesting designs from some GB’s of data. I think people love to relate to things that they know they made or know the inspiration behind it. I know I feel more attached to things that I had a part in.

I think the Friendship application is very interesting. I love the fact that the ethnographer was able to find actually patterns and label groups on her own from the given data. It would be very interesting to find the groups within your own groups. However, I think the project could be greatly enhanced with use of color. From just looking at it, you know that specific groups are one color. We have seen examples in class that are done by creating different groups to be a different color and then if they are in the same group, have the colors blend between the different groups. I think this project could benefit from this, to represent multiple groups.

I think the program done to display social networks from the University of Illinois didn’t follow the first rule that Moreno set. The images he has are very cluttered. The lines between the groups are very confusing and difficult to see due to the mass amounts of lines. I do like the idea of the project that they had created, it just needs to be adjusted for more data.