Networks in the global village

Even though this book is quite old fashioned, features and emphasis this book is pointing are quite applicable to those days also. This book emphasizes that people have social network with mostly weak ties rather than strong ties, which means people have a lot of acquaintances to say hello, but not that many friends that can share each other’s resources. In order to make visualization tools according to this effect, I believe there are two kinds of visualization tools we can consider for user develop their social network.

First, we can make the users of visualization to have better management of their weak ties. In these global days, we have much more opportunities to meet someone we don’t really know by traveling, gaming, and register to some social networks like blogs, cafes, etc. Indeed, as the paper mentioned, most of people are tending to have lots of acquaintances rather than having a few best friends in their life because of difference in gaining new resources that they cannot get by themselves. For example, people you know very much and can be called best friends are already known to you which means you know what they like, what they hate, and what they interested in. However, people you know only the face have lots of interesting features you don’t know now but will become aware of. Rather than asking some programming codes that you don’t know to your friends that have similar knowledge of yours, it is more likely reachable from sources from website or IDs that you know from blogs or cafés. Visualization tools considering improvement of managing those acquaintances is good to consider as an option to implement.

On the other hand, we can manage people who we know as our best friends using another type of visualization tool. Even though, it is common to have much more weak ties than strong ties, some people emphasize the important feature of having best friends in one’s social network. For example, some sort of business, or important issues to be considered carefully can’t be determined or considered by acquaintances that the one doesn’t even know real addresses of them. Some of the important issues like renting apartment to live with, or buying stocks by sharing money cannot be accomplished with people that the one don’t even know how wealth the person is. Those important features of one’s life cannot be with acquaintances but best friends or relatives. Managing those strong tie relations is also important to manage the one’s social network in these days and visualization tool to improve this strong tie is quite crucial issue to be considered.

I think this paper gave lots of considerations to be made by me so that I came up with those kinds of arguments above. This didn’t give much of visualization tool that I might be interested, but it gave some motivation to readers who are interested in visualizing social networks.
The Strength of Weak Ties

This paper also emphasizes the strength of Weak Ties as above paper does, but this paper emphasizes more on the diffusion strength of various ties in this global place. I was kind of interested on the fact that diffusion rate is much higher through weak ties than strong ties because I thought strong ties are more reliable to diffuse information to others with quick speed than weak tie does. After figuring out such unexpected result, I could fill how important to make visualization tool according to this weak tie relationship with people. I personally have a lot more weak ties than strong ties so that this paper gave enough interest to me by titling paper as “the strength of weak ties”.

In my opinion there can be two ways of visualizing this network according to diffusion rate resulted in this paper. There is a way to use this high diffusion of weak tie and make user have advantage from it by making some user friendly visualization tool, and there is another way to implement tool by limiting this diffusion rate of weak ties which can cause some level of gossip of one.

First one seems quite usable to many people because diffusion gives lots of good things to the user; if user did something great on it, the visualization tool using the high diffusion rate of weak tie can spread this good news within short time that can make user happy about this spreading effect. Visualization tool that maximizes this diffusion rate will also give user good advantage on chatting with acquaintances and emailing acquaintance in case where the spreading is required; some advertisement, etc.

Second kind of visualization will try to stop diffusion of weak tie in case of the diffusion violates privacy of user. Bunch of weak ties gives lots of advantage to social network because most of communications and interactions are going through acquaintances rather than strong tied friends. However, some times this huge amount of weak ties gives harm to one’s reputation because of quick spread of gossip and bad words of the one. Even though visualization tools are mostly to improve network among users by making them improve their network by analyzing visualization results, it is necessary to manage the network with some limitations in order to properly manage one’s reputation within social network. I can’t think of any good visualization tool example for this, but I believe this aspect of implementing visualization tool is also quite important.

I read from this paper that weak ties have more diffusion rate than strong ties, but I really don’t see quite reasonable answer why it is so. And also, this paper says that the strong ties cannot be bridge between other communicators, but I also don’t see why it is so. I believe some who knows A very well cannot also know B somehow, it is like I know by parents but I really don’t know the high school friends of my parents.
Visualizing Social Networks

This paper showed me some sort of timeline explaining how the visualization of social network developed through the time. Lots of visualization graphs were shown in this paper but most of them were not that interesting because of its out of date reason and simplicity without any smartness of design. Most of the images looked quite similar one another so that there was no fresh appeal given to me. However, some of the design after the computation possible era was quite fun and interesting because it had all the images drawable in computers but not by hand. I agree that computation gave such big improvements on visualizing networks in social.

However, I actually don’t like the notion of line and points drawing for visualization tool because it is too messy. Many students in our class used only circles or dots in order to visualize their networks but no lines. The reason that I was not interested in this paper is mostly because of its messy design of showing/visualizing social network using too many lines and dots. I agree it is mandatory to use lines in order to show the relationships among people but I believe there can be other ways to visualize those relationships other than using lines. It is true that line is convenient tool to visualize relationships but it is also true that simply using lines doesn’t give simplicity to whole visualization but confusing result.

I think instead of using those lines, it might be much easier to look if there is hiding tool or something that can hide the lines that are unnecessary but reveal those when it is necessary. For example, if the user wants to see the relationship the person represented as dot, the user can just drag his mouse to that dot and the visualization will show all the lines connected from that dot which results in showing all the relationship this dot has. And of course hide, if mouse is dragged to other place. This tool will give much clean design of visualization tool which can give users more convenience to see the social network.

I believe implementing this kind of tool was impossible at those days because they were visualizing networks by hand writing. And also, with hardware support that barely runs windows, it was much harder to have this simple kind of image motion (pop up lines and disappear lines). This is why I am pretty much appreciated with such a great development of hardware in these days.

I think lots of other possibilities on visualizing social network are in presents because most of web browsers show not only the contents of image files, but also videos and audios, etc.