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WIKIPEDIA USER PROFILES: WHY ONLINE PROFILE INFORMATION DIFFERS

PURPOSE

To better understand why profiles of differing online volunteer communities present different information

WHAT IS A USER PROFILE?

"A collection of personal data associated to a specific user. A profile refers therefore to the explicit digital representation of a person's identity"

– Wikipedia

MAIN FINDINGS

Online social networks provide more overall information than online volunteer communities

QUESTIONS POSED:

- Why some online profiles follow rigid structures rather than loose structures?

- Do structures differ within different online communities?

METHODOLOGY

* Look at ~50 randomly selected active Wikipedia profiles

* Develop theoretical categories of information from Wikipedia profile

* Analyze other OLVC's to analyze their construct

* Add additional categories of information

* Compare theoretical categories between Wikipedia and others
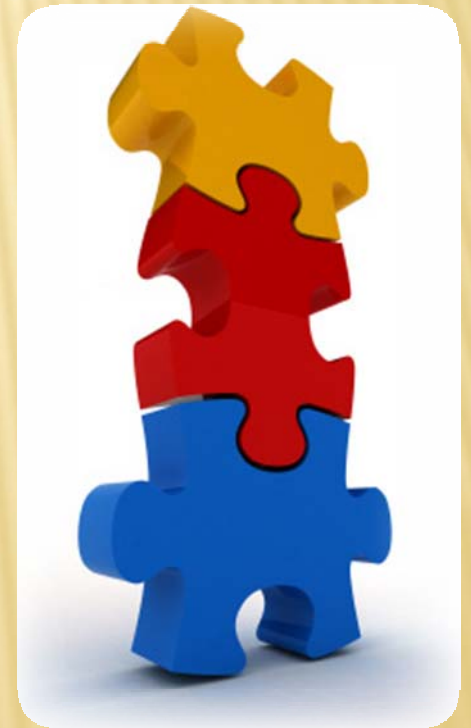
Theoretical Categories of Information	Examples In Everyday Life	Examples in Online Social Communities	Why we use it?
Affiliations	Political party, friends list, clubs, networks, professional associations, alumni	Groups joined on Facebook	Share viewpoints with friends/others
Artistic Expression	Poem, song, pictures toward artistic,	Customization of MySpace profile page	Show everyone how we are feeling
Personal Information	Name, birthday, likes & dislikes, desires and dreams	Legal Name, Hobbies, Interests	Fulfill desire to be known, create common ground
Demographics	Age, sex, gender, race, sexual orientation (Legally relevant)	Age, sex, on MySpace/Facebook	Need to find community
Experiences	Stories, personal media, pictures, videos, etc.	Stories users share on Wikipedia	Develop richness
Benefits from OLVC	Marketing for your favorite student group	"Why you should join Wikipedia"	Improve community they are apart of

COMPARISON ONLINE COMMUNITIES

Online Volunteer Communities	Affiliations	Artistic Expression	Concrete Personal Information	Demographics	Discrete Personal Information	Experiences	Benefits from OLVC
Wikipedia	X	~	~		X	X	X
LinkedIn	X		X	X		X	
Facebook	X	~	X	X	X	X	
MySpace	X	X		X			

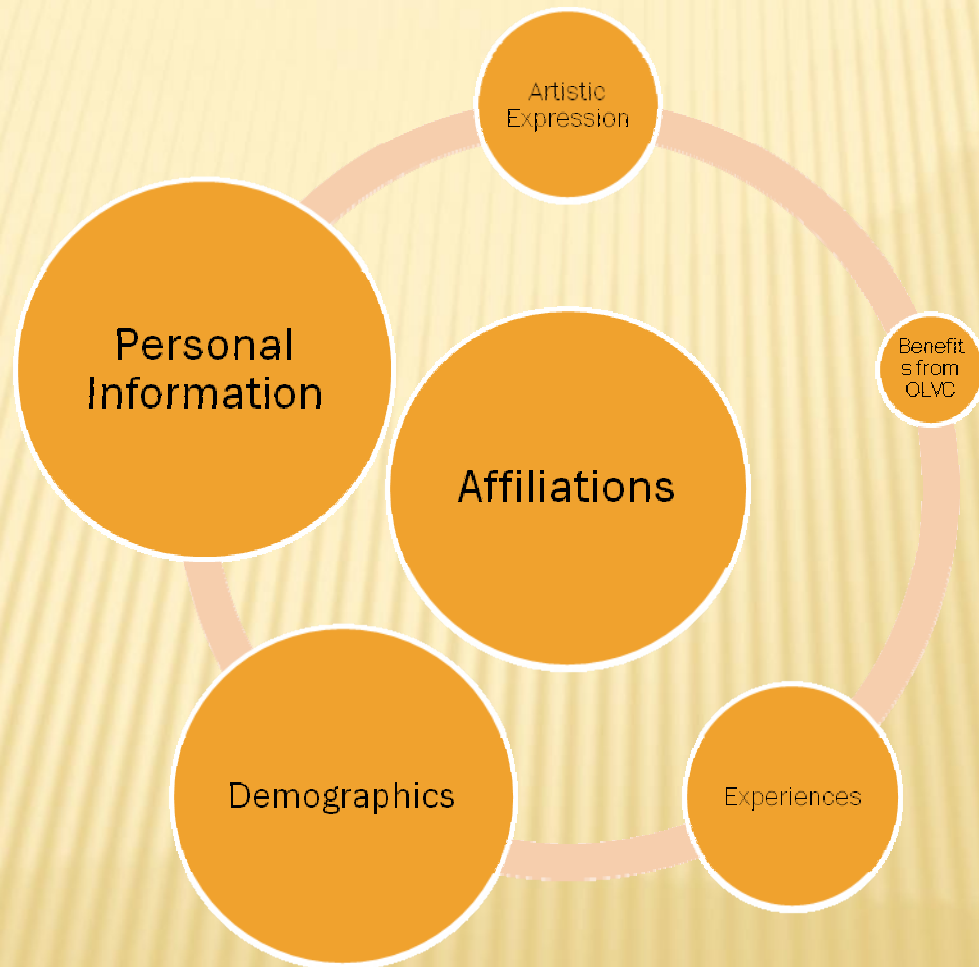X = HIGH LIKELIHOOD OF APPEARANCE
~ = LOW LIKELIHOOD OF APPEARANCE

ONLINE VOLUNTEER COMMUNITIES

* Size of Circle = Frequency of Occurrence

ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS

* Size of Circle = Frequency of Occurrence

FINDINGS:

- Online communities all share a need for having affiliations

- Rigid online profile structures tend to have more amounts of information

- As individuals, we only put what we believe is important

IMPLICATIONS

- User profiles are increasing as more and more users sign onto user profiles

- This framework is the first step in better understanding the differences between profiles in different online communities

- Using our framework, researchers can build upon it to better understand how social profiles differ among OLVC's

NEXT STEPS

- In our 8 week study, we could only scratch the surface in understanding the structuring of OLVC's profile pages
- Our ultimate goal is to develop a framework which can predict the correct type of profile page for a certain OLVC