INFO290 Social Computing Class Project Title

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Abstract

I propose a project that will attempt to identify and quantify the links in our network between two clusters. As a team of one, with nearly zero coding knowledge and no experience with python, I think this will stretch the bounds of what is possible during the semester.

Introduction and Background

In our lives we tend to move among several large networks. These networks tend to be fairly distinct. Here is an example from my own work experience. It is my linkedin social graph:



The same is true of our social experience. I am sure my Facebook profile would have similar large clusters representing my high school, college, business school, work, friends of my girlfriend, etc.. One thing that Facebook and linkedin show us about our connections is a list of mutual frieds. Unless you click on this list, you only see 3 random friends in common.

However, some mutual friends are more interesting than others. Essentially these are links across two distinct networks. For instance, I am not surprised or particularly interested to find out that two of my Haas classmates know each other. However, if one of my Haas classmates knows my best friend from high school, then that is more interesting. Maybe the two of us should try to get our mutual friend to come visit us! I call these "non-obvious mutual friends" (NOMF's).

Unlike LinkedIN, Facebook does nothing to illustrate the shape of your social graph or where your friends fit within each network. Facebook used to allow developers to access the information necessary to visualize your graph, but have since restricted their API¹

This project is timely, as Facebook just announced it's own attempts to quantify our graphs into clusters. They call this project, Smart Lists ²

I propose an application that, through a combination of API's and scraping, figures out who your NOMFs are across your social network. Due to limits in Facebook's API, a working application might not be possible. If that is the case, I will outline a scoring system for defining those connections in a meaningful way.

Provide an introduction to the problem with more detailed information on the background of the problem, e.g., statistics on why the problem is significant. Show how others have solved the problem and what is still lacking.

Illustrate where is the social component in the proposal.

Proposed Solution

I am not yet sure how I will acquire, analyze or present the information.

¹ <u>http://danielmclaren.com/2008/01/facebook-mutual-friend-network-</u> visualization-in-flash#_=_

² http://blog.facebook.com/blog.php?post=10150278932602131

Summary

In summary, I hope to create an application that takes a user's social networks and provides meaningful information about it, with regard to interesting mutual connections.