Social Network Innovation Lab Study

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This past summer, I, along with another Sociology student, examined a community of science professionals. The community held events and meet-ups in a large American city, yet communicated largely through Twitter. The goal of our study was to determine how Twitter – and other forms of social media - influenced different community interactions. We chose to analyze the presence and the degree of cognitive trust, affect based trust, mentorship, and collaboration within the community, and whether Twitter facilitated any trusting, mentoring, or collaborative relationships. By creating and deploying survey instruments, we helped gather the members’ perspectives on the presence of the aforementioned concepts. The data was then utilized by other Social Network Innovation Lab students seeking to statistically interpret the responses. In June, we attended a community event, and had a chance to speak with several of the community organizers and it’s active participants. Our field notes and observations helped foster a greater understanding of how the events unfolded, and how the members incorporated Twitter into real time. Throughout June and July, we interviewed community members who volunteered, through Skype and through the phone. After transcribing, coding, and analyzing the interviews, we wrote a sociological, quantitative study, summarizing our findings.

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