THE FACEBOOK PROJECT
SOCIAL CAPITAL AND THE CHIEF

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INTRODUCTION

- Who am I?

    - 2nd year graduate studying Sociology and Library & Information Science, attended UIUC as an undergrad

    - Social Computing meets Sociology: Social and community informatics, human-computer interaction, and digital divide

- What is the Facebook Project?

    - Big research project on the impacts of Facebook.com on the UIUC undergrad population

WHY STUDY FACEBOOK?

- What is Facebook?

  - A Social Networking Service (SNS), basically a way to connect people to each other and share information (process, knowledge, and thing/media)

- Why is it a big deal?

  - It's a monumental presence on the internet, a sort of evolution of the web

  - Almost everyone has a profile and checks it frequently, most people use the site quite extensively

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SOCIAL CAPITAL?

- Social capital based on the We Haase-Witte-Hampton model

  - Networked capital (strong and v ties)

  - Participatory capital (organizati related)

  - Community capital (a happy combination)

- Previous studies have found
Facebook to impact Social Capital

SOCIAL CAPITAL TO SOCIAL CHANGE?

- An example (Alla Zollers, ASIS&T Conference, 2007):

    - "As the landscape of the Internet has changed, so have the forms of online activism. For example, in March of 2006, an estimated 14,415 high school students in the greater Los Angeles area participated in school walkouts as part of the protests against legislation that would toughen immigration laws in the United States. The majority of the walkouts were coordinated on the Internet, and more specifically on the social network site

THE CHIEF ON FACEBOOK

- No need to reiterate the basics...

- As the Chief was removed in February the issue sparked quite a response

- One of the flashpoints of the debate too

  on Facebook in the form of threats made against
  an anti-Chief student

- Facebook still contains a record of much of the

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What do people think about the campus climate in regards to race? What actions have they taken in regards to the Chief?

- What is the character of groups surrounding the topic? What do we notice about group purpose, composition, and activity?

- What does this suggest about Social Ca and Social Movements?

MY METHODS: SURVEY

- The Facebook Project multi-year survey

  - 75 person response set (2 w/o active accounts)

  - Random sample from DMI

  - Undergraduate, full-time, degree-seeking, 18+

  - Not specifically designed for t project
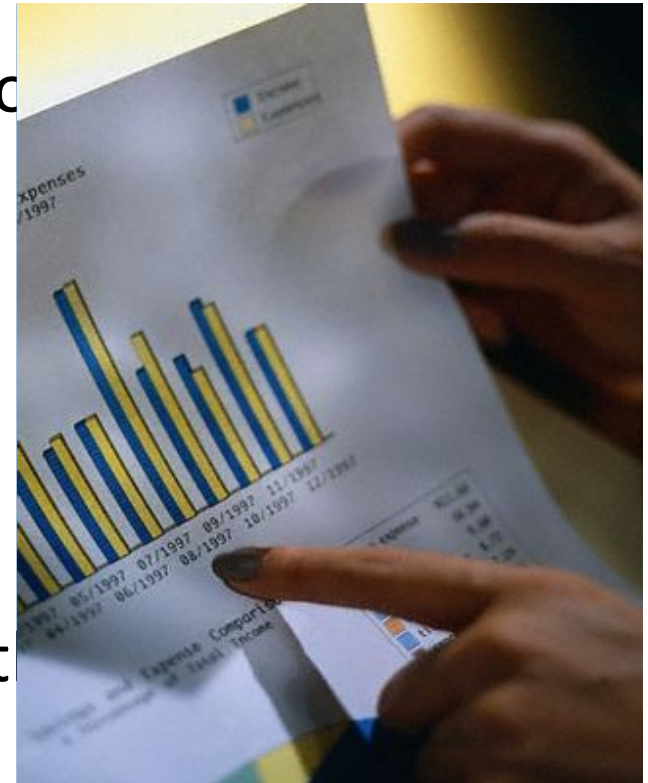
MY METHODS: CONTENT ANALYSIS

- Overview data for future studies (17 groups)

    - Basic ID info (name, URL, date, group category, etc...)

    - Written purpose (description)

    - Composition (number and racial identity members, officers, and admins, relevant groups)

- Text content analysis

    - Sociological ethnographic style coding

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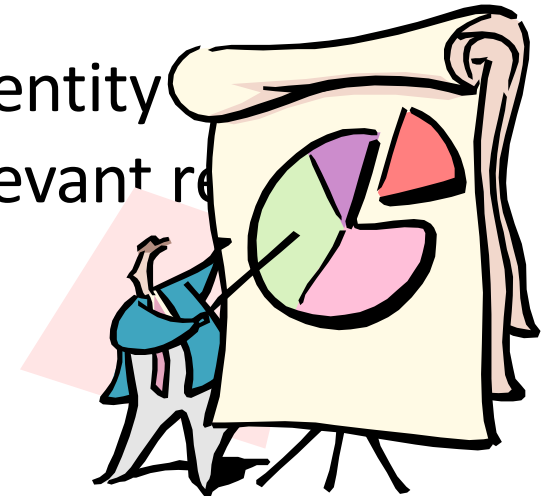
AN INADEQUATE SUMMARY OF A FEW FINDINGS

- **Survey: Feelings on the campus climate**

  - On the whole people feel both the Facebook and campus environment are pretty friendly to both minorities and Native Americans specifically

  - People of color felt it was less safe, but only a little bit

  - This sample did not reflect a high number of racial minority respondents (and no NA participants), however

AN INADEQUATE SUMMARY OF A FEW FINDINGS CONTINUED…

- **Survey: Pro and Anti Chief Activity**

  - Active picture-changing protest was relatively low (17.8%)

  - These findings suggest that the environment on Facebook (based on this study) is dominated primarily by pro-Chief

Group Membership	Opinions on the Chief

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AN INADEQUATE SUMMARY OF A FEW FINDINGS CONTINUED...

- **Content Analysis: Sheer Numbers**

  - Of the 17 groups examined only 4 were anti-Chief.

  - In general the overwhelming majority of groups were pro-Chief, many with members numbering in the hundreds or even thousands

  - A few 300-800 person pro-Chief groups were left out.

  - The two biggest anti-Chief groups (Anti-Chief and F*** the Chief) had only about 250 members each

  - Whereas the top three biggest pro-Chief groups

- **Content Analysis: Composition**

  - Not surprisingly estimates on racial composition found more White students in pro-Chief groups and more students of color in anti-Chief groups

  - Methods for collection of this data were highly flawed and can only be regarded as good suggestions or well-informed speculation

  - There was a great deal of cross-over between ethnic/racial cultural groups and causes and anti-Chief groups, and between various pro-Chief groups and sporting and school pride groups

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  - Both sides seem to like Stephen Colbert

AN INADEQUATE SUMMARY OF A FEW FINDINGS CONTINUED…

- **Content Analysis**: **Discourse** - It's too early to say, but here's what I've got:

  - Topics include issues of race/ethnicity, racism/discrimination/prejudice, presentation and ownership of image/identity, mascots vs. symbols, school pride and tradition, reliability/validity/relevance of facts and information, and more.

  - Tone ranges considerably, I purposely chose a couple of very volatile groups so my results included (with varying degrees of

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IN CONCLUSION

- This is honestly just a start

- It's a pretty intense topic and gives a strong reflection of campus climate

- Facebook is a rich environment in which we can study perspectives on race and campus climate and get an idea of how Facebook might supplement or impact social capital

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FOR FUTURE STUDY

· A larger survey sample specifically about the Chief, potentially with subset populations (distributed to pro-Chief and anti-Chief groups)

· Use of this analysis set in exploring the other 12 groups (plus the half dozen big ones that are missing)

· Further explore just how connected the digital interactions and mobilization is to the face-to-face world (how they're specifically extending and enabling social capital)

Thanks!

www.thefacebookproject.com

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