

## Roundtable Discussion: Social Network Analysis

The Web transformed internet to a global information sharing infrastructure; but the online social network websites further transformed the Web into a global cyber community. As a result, people perceive the Web increasingly as a social medium that fosters interaction among people, activities of groups, formation and evolution of communities, for sharing information, knowledge, experiences, and even wisdom.

The social flair of the Web poses new challenges and opportunities that iSchools are uniquely positioned to address. Social networking in the Web is a phenomenon of scientific interest from multiple disciplines; there is demand for interdisciplinary research on the rules and behavioral patterns that emerge and characterize community formation and evolution. Further, the social Web introduces new behaviors for an on-line community: searching for similar people, searching for mentor/mentees, and searching for answers by combining blogs/answers from multiple people. Moreover, the misuse potential of social formations cannot be stressed enough: People are confronted with unreliable or even malicious content, with surveillance and even stealth of information and of personal data; detection and protection mechanisms are needed here, based on a deep understanding of patterns of misuse and misbehavior. Finally, the social structures in the Web is very diverse: including wikis and folksonomies where people contribute semantically rich content, platforms for collaborative annotations where people enrich existing content, bulletin boards and similar fora where people seek for advice but also establish new contacts.

Researchers of iSchool are well positioned to address these challenges by integrating perspectives from sociology, information science, scientometrics, network science, and computational informatics. The integration of these conceptual frameworks is likely to not only offer new insights for the modeling and the analysis of social networks, but also to post new questions that are now made possible by the availability of the huge volume of data regarding a wide range of networks. For instance, the study of collaborator networks can shed lights on the relationship between their growth and the popularity of the ideas central to the network; which can be used to predict the growth of network and/or the epidemiology of ideas.

The proposed roundtable will bring together researchers from the iSchool community to discuss trends, new questions, and innovative ideas regarding social networks. For instance, how to discover and analyze subcommunities within a very large social network? How new behaviors in on-line social networks emerge through interactions? How social networks hidden within blogs, fora, and other forms of on-line communications can be identified? What are the impacts of social networks on social activities? How do social networks form, evolve, and grow? How ideas are spread over time and space using social networks? The proposed roundtable will

stress the interdisciplinary challenges of these and other topics related to social networks.

Through these interactions, we hope the roundtable can help the iSchool community in establishing one or multiple grand challenges regarding social networks and launching an effort to develop a strategy that aims to position iSchools to be leaders in addressing these grand challenges.