

Assignment #3: Communication Diary

Comm 481: Social Networks
Prof. Keith Hampton

Instructions

Your assignment is to keep a record of every contact that you make with people over a continuous and “typical” seven day period (must be 7 days in a row; cannot be over spring break). Include all kinds of contacts, such as saying hello, chatting, talking, meeting, or sending and receiving a message, including those that take place in-person, over the phone, on the Internet, or using any other medium of communication. Note: You may exclude interactions that take place in the classroom or as part of a course assignment (our class and others).

Record your interactions in the attached diary shortly after they happen. Do not wait and complete the diary retrospectively at the end of the day or week (make additional copies of the diary sheets as necessary).

Each person that you interact with should be listed individually in a column on the attached worksheet. You should record the date of the first time you interact during the seven day diary period, and circle the day of the week for each day that you have an interaction. The first time a person is added to your worksheet, complete the information on personal and tie characteristics. Record each interaction by medium of communication over the duration of the seven day diary period. You do not need to add a new column for each interaction, you do need a column for each person, keep a running tally in each column (each interaction is scored as one, regardless of length). You should also update the “Content” field after each interaction.

See the attached key for a coding scheme that you can use to record information on your worksheet. You may create new coding schemes or modify the current scheme, but you must maintain a similar level of detail.

Part I

After you have recorded your interactions for the full 7 days, analyze your diary and write a blog post answering the following questions. Your blog post should be 1250-1750 words, not including your answer to question 1. For questions 2 and 3, be sure to discuss your answer with reference to the course readings. For example, are your observations consistent or inconsistent with the readings? Do they provide new evidence for or against existing hypotheses? Based on your observations can you formulate new hypotheses, theories, or conclusions that build or contrast with the literature you have read?

Questions

- 1) Who are the 5 people you interacted with the most often? Who are the 5 people you interacted with the most often for each of the communication media you used? Briefly describe each of these people and your relationship/tie.
- 2) Is there a relationship between the medium of communication and/or frequency of contact and the strength of the tie? The type of support exchanged? The type of relationship? Duration of relationship? Distance to the person? The person’s age, gender, education or marital status? The similarity of their personal characteristics to your own? What if anything does this say about how the Internet and/or mobile phone may change the composition of our social networks?
- 3) What characteristics of the tie and person were most common for those interactions that took place inside your home? In public places? In other places? What if anything does this say about the role of place in how we maintain and form social networks? How do you predict use of the Internet and/or mobile phone is or might influence this pattern?

Part II

Bring a copy of your diary to class (keep a backup copy for yourself). Print your full name and your blog username on the top of each page and staple them together. Meet with your small group, combine your results and discuss the questions from Part I. Make a short 10 minute group presentation explaining your observations. At the end of the class, hand in all your diary worksheets to the instructor.

Name: _____ Blog ID _____ Start date: _____ End date: _____

	Name/Nickname of contact:						
A. Individual characteristics of the contacted person.	First time in log (date)						
	Contact on (days/week)	MTWRFSS	MTWRFSS	MTWRFSS	MTWRFSS	MTWRFSS	MTWRFSS
	Gender						
	Age						
	Education						
	Marital Status						
	Residence (miles from yours)						
B. Tie characteristics	Tie strength						
	Duration of relationship (years)						
	Relationship to you						
	Place (your location)						
	Content						
C. Frequency of communication	Face-to-face						
	Telephone (landline)						
	Cell Phone						
	Text message (SMS)						
	Instant Messaging (IM)						
	Facebook Message						
	Webcam						

Worksheet key:

A. Individual Characteristics

Education:

- (1) Less than high school (2) High school or equivalent (3) some college or university
(4) 4-year undergrad degree (5) Graduate school or above (6) Don't know

Marital status:

- (1) Single (2) Married (3) Other (4) Don't know

B. Tie Characteristics

Tie Strength:

- (1) Close (2) Moderate (3) Not close

Relationship to you (choose all that apply):

- (1) Spouse/partner (2) Parent (3) Child (4) Sibling (5) Other relative
(6) Friend (7) Neighbor (8) Co-worker (9) Classmate (10) Acquaintance
(11) _____ (12) _____

Place (choose all that apply):

- (1) Your residence (2) Their residence (3) Other residence (4) Workplace
(5) School (6) Public place (7) _____ (8) _____

Content (choose all that apply):

- (1) You provided emotional aid (2) They provided emotional aid
(3) You provided companionship (4) They provided companionship
(5) You provided small services (6) They provided small services
(7) You provided large services (8) They provided large services
(9) You provided financial aid (10) They provided financial aid
(11) You provided job information (12) They provided job information
(13) _____ (14) _____
(15) _____ (16) _____