



# CS 4803 Social Computing: Personality and Behavior

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Facebook Profiles  
Reflect Actual  
Personality, not Self-  
Idealization

# Summary

- The paper studies if discrepancies exist between people's representation of themselves on Facebook versus their actual personalities.
- Survey and self-report on N=236 university students (mostly)
- Findings:
  - Facebook profile acts more as an extension of a person's offline self, instead of carefully crafted personas
  - Openness and extraversion are best predicted; neuroticism difficult to predict
- Two reasons cited behind the findings: the information on the user's wall, and the credibility that the friends bring to user's profiles through their interaction

Private Traits and  
Attributes are  
Predictable from Digital  
Records of Human  
Behavior

# Summary

- Facebook “likes” used to predict a range of highly sensitive personal attributes like ethnicity, religious and political views, intelligence, happiness, parental separation, age and gender.
- 58K users of Facebook who consented to authorize the mypersonality app
- Participants took many sociometric and psychometric tests
- Predictive accuracies were very high for sexual orientation, parental separation, political views, and the openness attribute of Big Five personality scale
  - The algorithms proved 88% accurate for determining male sexuality, 95% accurate in distinguishing African-American from Caucasian-American and 85% for differentiating Republican from Democrat.
  - Christians and Muslims were correctly classified in 82% of cases and relationship status and substance abuse was predicted with an accuracy between 65% and 73%.

## Your Friends` Personalities

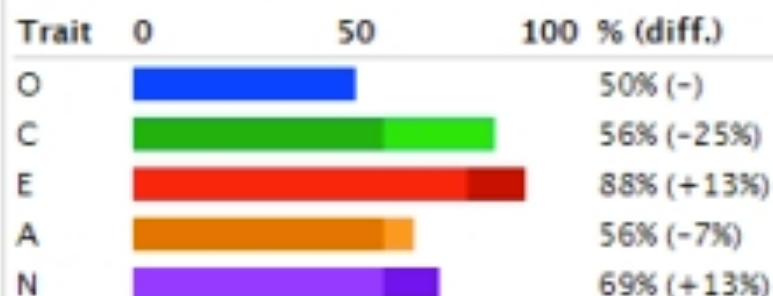
### Most Like Me

*Your Personality Soulmate*

Sofie Jansson



Similarity Score: 85.77%  
(How was this calculated?)



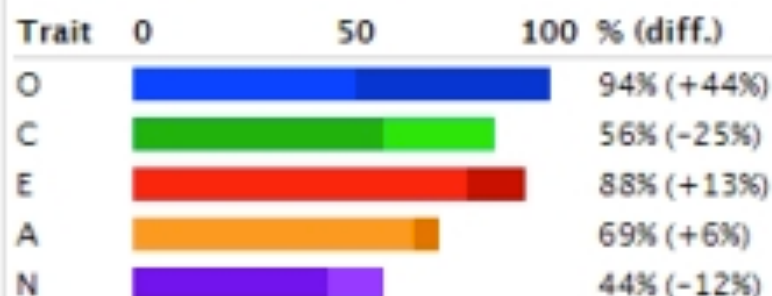
### Least Like Me

*Maybe Opposites Attract?*

Damon Alexander Young



Similarity Score: 75.87%  
(How was this calculated?)



Friend`s Name	Personality					Similarity Score	View Comparison Graph	View Full Personality Profile	Friend Rating Status
	O	C	E	A	N				
<b>You</b>	50%	81%	75%	63%	56%				
Sofie Jansson	50%	56%	88%	56%	69%	86%			
Sara Lee	88%	63%	63%	69%	56%	80%			
Damon Alexander Young	94%	56%	88%	69%	44%	76%			

Trace: • [start](#)

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# Welcome to the myPersonality Project Website

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## If you're here because of the news coverage:

This wiki is aimed at researchers, although you're welcome to look around and see what we do.

We also encourage you to try 🌐 <http://www.YouAreWhatYouLike.com> which predicts your personality based on your Facebook Likes.

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## News

- 2013-04-22 Added Smiley data in the download section
- 2013-02-12 [There were 4 new papers based on our data](#) in January of 2013 alone - in PNAS, PLOS ONE, WWW2013, and CWSM2013. Congratulations to authors!
- 2012-10-24 **LOADS OF NEW DATA AND IMPROVED LAYOUT!** Check out [download databases section](#).
- Last.FM music DB collected by 🌐 [Liam McNamara](#). Click [here](#) for full details.
- [news archive](#)

## Introduction

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start



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11 March 2013 Last updated at 15:00 ET



## Facebook 'likes' predict personality

Sexuality, political leanings and even intelligence can be gleaned from the things you choose to "like" on Facebook, a study suggests.

Researchers at Cambridge University used algorithms to predict religion, politics, race and sexual orientation.

The research, [published in the journal PNAS](#), forms surprisingly accurate personal portraits, researchers said.

The findings should "ring alarm bells" for users, privacy campaigners said.

The study used 58,000 volunteers who alongside their Facebook "likes" and demographic information also provided psychometric testing results - designed to highlight personality traits.

The Facebook likes were fed into algorithms and matched with the



What do your Facebook likes say about you?

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[Facebook changes privacy settings](#)

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"This research should ring alarm bells for anyone who thinks that privacy settings are the solution to protecting information online. We need to fundamentally re-think how much data we are voluntarily sharing," said Nick Pickles, director of privacy campaign group Big Brother Watch.

"Yet again, it is clear the lack of transparency about how users' data is being used will lead to entirely justified fears about our data being exploited for commercial gain."

Your reflections

Online tools may be providing “safe” places for introverts to express themselves; so they may appear less of an introvert than they actually are. Would this gap be accounted for by the analysis in the second paper?

The first paper says that Facebook profile reflects actual personality and not self-idealization. Does this mean people do not carefully curate/regulate their online personas?

For the first paper, would you have got different results if the researchers used actual data from Facebook instead of self-reports?

One reason why Facebook “likes” are perhaps predictive of individual attributes is because it is a general platform. Could Instagram, Tumblr, or reddit activities equally inform us of the same?

Instead of Facebook “likes”, if you were to predict individual attributes on Twitter, which cues would you use and why?

Do you think it is ethical to release a Facebook app and use it to collect people's data? How would you design such a study? What are the challenges of opt-in methods?



Ability to infer accurately individual traits can have implications in better personalization and search, what are its risks in privacy? What are the other implications of such inferences?

The first paper recruited US and German participants. Could there be a cultural bias in the findings? PS: they were also a younger population.

Relatedly, in contrast to the second paper, the first paper is based on surveys/psychometric and sociometric scales and self-reports. Compare the pros and cons of the two approaches.

# Logistics

- Monday 10/19 – NO CLASS
- Wednesday 10/21 – Presentations of two related papers from your term project (10-15 minutes for each student)
- Wednesday 10/28 – Mid-term presentations of projects + Assignment I due
- Doodle poll for two missed classes – will be sent out tonight