



CS 6474 Social Computing: Disclosure and Regulation

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Self-disclosure in
computer-mediated
communication: The role of
self-awareness and visual
anonymity

Summary

- The paper examines self-disclosure enabled by computer-mediated communication (CMC)
- Main finding: ""
- Three studies:
 - Compared to FtF settings, CMC showed higher self-disclosure
 - Visual anonymity promoted greater self-disclosure
 - 2 X 2 design to investigate the roles of public and self-awareness in self-disclosure: Greater private self-awareness + lower public self-awareness (lack of identifiability and/or accountability concerns) was associated with higher levels of self-disclosure

4chan and /b/: An Analysis of Anonymity and Ephemerality in a Large Online Community

Summary

- Study of 4chan's /b/
- Contributions:
 - Dominated by playful exchanges of images and links
 - Most threads spend just five seconds on the first page and less than five minutes on the site before expiring
 - 90% of posts are made by fully anonymous users, with other identity signals adopted and discarded at will

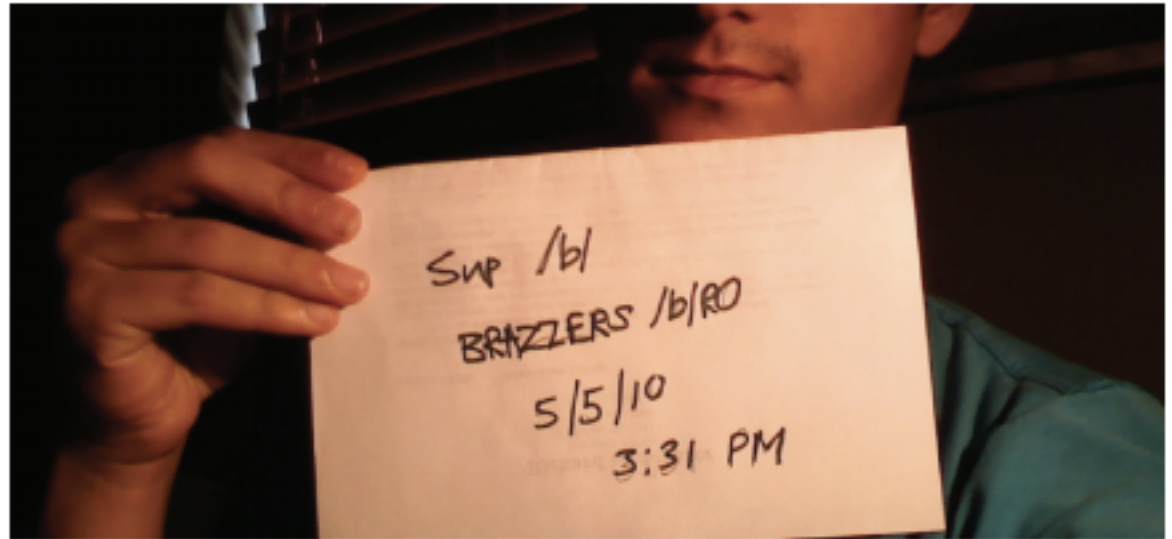
What kind of similarities and differences exist between the two papers?

What kind of social computing platforms (or online communities) can benefit from anonymity?

Which ones could be hurt due to anonymity?

The million dollar question! How can we allow people to be self-disclosing (via anonymous identities) but still be civil?

Last week we discussed about archival in the context of self-presentation. How do archival, and complementarily ephemerality impact an online community?



In an anonymous site, what is the purpose of signaling a fluid notion of identity (like above)?

Over the last few years since the three studies, many new platforms have emerged. What are additional ways/cues people use to manage their identity and self-disclosure?

Does anonymity always have to be a design feature? Is it possible to be anonymous on a platform where this is not the case?

Are anonymity and ephemerality necessarily binary features of social computing platforms? What are some possible ways we navigate the “gray areas”?

/b/ users also adopt various textual, linguistic, and visual cues to signal social status, e.g., in-dialect writing (/b/ slangs) serves as an entry-level signal of membership and status.

What other methods are adopted in other communities for the same?

Do you see such signaling only in anonymous sites?

Joinson employs a lab study approach, assigning dyads to CMC conditions. How would you replicate the three studies on today's social computing systems?

Studies of self-disclosure are in many ways a contrast to the studies of self-presentation we covered in earlier weeks. If Facebook is a place where we “perform”, what is the place for self-disclosure? Are social computing platforms only meant for us to present the best of ourselves?