Abstract

Blogging presents one of the most fascinating **social phenomenons** of our time. This change in the **flow** of online **information** might radically change the way we look at **news** providers and large media conglomerates. It also provides an extraordinary **online laboratory** to analyze how **fads** and **ideas** travel through **social communities**. The concept of **word-of-mouth** has always intrigued sociologists, anthropologists, and lately, marketers. Now, maybe for the first time, sociologists have the opportunity to better understand this intriguing **social behavior**.

Blogviz is a flash driven, online visualization tool for mapping blogs **connectivity** and information diffusion across the blogosphere. Blogviz explores the idea of a **meme** behavior by assuming a direct correlation with **topics** distribution among weblogs. By analyzing the **dissemination patterns** through time, it will be possible to track popular **dispatchers** and key **innovators**, and also, follow the evolution of a specific topic, from its beginning to an eventual **tipping point**, where it leaps the blog community and reaches the mainstream.

Blogviz intends to make a solid contribution in disentangling this highly **complex network** for further study, research and analysis. It will embody a rich media application with extensive use of **data visualization** and **information architecture**. The backend is going to be supported by hourly updated XML RSS feeds provided by **Blogdex.net**, a personal research project lead by Cameron Marlow at MIT Media Lab. By unraveling the dynamics behind the blogosphere we might be able to improve our knowledge on the mechanics of **online social communities** and, to some extent, the mechanics of **complex social networks**. (see also **Audience**)

Blogviz will be an intelligent, self-learning system. Only after analyzing a considerable number of topics, will the finding of popular blog dispatchers and true innovators become meaningful. The more data it analyzes, the more accurate the outcome will be.