Mapping your Facebook or LinkedIn Network

OBJECTIVE: The goal of this assignment is for you to start exploring what your personal network looks like, and how you can instinctually gleam some information about it without even knowing SNA well.

SUBMISSIONS: A Word document with your network displayed and your interpretations/analysis uploaded to Moodle

DUE DATE: Monday 1/21/2019 by midnight

Set-up

For this exercise, you will need:

- An active Facebook account or Linkedin
- For Facebook Assignment, you'll need:
  - Google Chrome as a browser
  - Lost Circles plugin for Google Chrome
  - Gephi for advanced analysis
- For LinkedIn:
  - Go to http://socilab.com/#home to see your network

Instructions

1. Launch your Chrome browser
2. Log in to Facebook
   a. Locate and install the **Lost Circles** plugin: https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/lost-circles-social-netwo/ehpmfdlcppenimpibdifodjgfafkjhjl/related
   b. Make sure your Lost Circles plugin is installed. You will see an icon that looks like this:

   c. Click on the Lost Circles icon (the one with the three circles), and select "Start Loading"

- At this point, the plugin will begin doing some behind-the-scenes work to extract the names and relations of all your friends. Depending on how big your list of friends is, this might take a while. Make sure that it has loaded 100% of your network before doing anything further

- Once the plugin has extracted 100% of your network, click on the icon again, and hit Visualize.

<p style="text-align:center;color:red">Ta-Da!!</p>

- To zoom in and out, you will need a mouse with a track wheel (not sure how that works on a laptop without a mouse, sorry).

- To move nodes around, just click on them, and without releasing the left button, drag them to where you want to replace them.

- To see who each individual is, you can just hover your mouse over his or her picture, and you will get a pop-up icon with their information.

- To download your data, you can click on the Lost Circles icon, and select Download. The formats are only graphical for network analysis, which you can't do right now. However, once you learn how to use the SNA software, you can download them further and run a deeper level of analysis.

- You can also drag people around, but you will notice that they will always revert to where they were originally because of the gravity of the network (we'll discuss later!)

Explore your network

Once you have finished loading your network, you will probably see:

- A very tight cluster in the middle with you in the center (nice to be the center of attention, no?)

- Some networks that extend beyond the main cluster with some additional clusters
- A bunch of lonely nodes on the margins
- Zoom in on some of the clusters to see who is in them. Do those people have any relations to each other?

Analysis[1]

1. Copy/paste your network into a Word document

2. Describe the key features of your personal networks:

   a. Cluster in the middle

   b. Connected networks that are in the periphery

   c. Disconnected lonely nodes in the periphery

   d. Any small connected networks in the periphery

3. How fragmented is your network?

4. Can you identify some subgroups and interpret them based on some characteristics, e.g., social activity, institution, life phase, geographical phase?

5. Are there any key actors in your personal network who play strategic roles like bridging different subgroups?

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[1] Modified from Dr. Gil Viry's Creating Facebook networks with "Lost Circle" plugin for Chrome

6. Based on lecture 1 and the visualization of your Facebook network and thinking of your personal relationships with relatives and friends, do you think of yourself as belonging to a small set of groups or rather operating in a shifting diverse network of individuals?

7. Write any additional reflections you have on your network