Observations on Failure in Blogs

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Abstract
The capability of placing “comments” on the posts makes the blogspace rather a complex environment. One of the interesting phenomena in blogspace is “blogger failure” when a blogger stops writing after a certain amount of time and will not return to blogspace for a long time, or when a blogger does not get any comment from her audience. In this paper we illustrate our observation on bloggers failure in a unique blogspace. First, we introduce PersianBlog blogspace briefly along with our observations of behaviors of bloggers on placing comments. Next, we will provide our definition of failure, and give a broad future research path to model failure in blogspace.

Keywords
Modeling, Failure, Blogs

1. Introduction
Blogs are interesting forms of large social networks. In the blogosphere, bloggers have relationships with others through links and comments. A given blogger usually have a set of friends, and a regular number of readers, which tend to comment on her postings. While there are several works on issues related to blogospheres, the blogspace is so complicated that it has may unidentified mysteries behind. One of these facts is the phenomenon of “Blogger Failure” or when a blogger stops blogging. We introduce two types of failures: Connection-failure and Commitment-failure. Connection-failure occurs when a blogger loses her visitors gradually, until she has no visitors at all, and gets no comments on her postings. This blogger might continue writing posts even when she does not receive any comments. Such a behavior is not considered in our study since in our definition, the identity of a blog is defined by its interactions, and its role in a larger network, say blogosphere.

Commitment-failure occurs when a blogger starts a blog and quits writing after a while due to several hidden or well-known reasons. In this paper, our goal is to present a brief observation on the Failure phenomenon which could be employed successfully in future attempts to devise a model. To our knowledge there is no previous work that directly addresses the problem of failure in blogs. However, there are many studies around blogspace. While many researches on weblogs, focus on post data, few researchers have focused on comments. Trevino et al. [4] show the importance of comments in blog analysis, and [2] investigates the relations of comments and posts, and extracts commenting pattern based on blog popularity.

2. Data corpus
We selected the fast growing Persian weblogs [3] for our study. By October 2005, Persian weblogs were estimated to be about 700,000 (out of an estimated total value of 100 million blogs worldwide), of which about 40,000-110,000 are active, mostly written in Persian language. The data is collected by crawling PersianBlog.com which contains more than 22,000 weblogs in a 15 months period. Table 1 illustrates several features of collected data set. For more information about this data set please look at [1].

We observed four type of links in our study [3]:

- Blog Roll Link which is a link in the side bar of blog page. These links point to blogs of the blogger’s friends.
- Post Link is a hyperlink in the body of a post.
- OutLink is a link in the body of a comment.

Table 1: Basic analysis on corpus size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weblogs</td>
<td>22,306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posts</td>
<td>348,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct Comments</td>
<td>1,257,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commented Posts</td>
<td>339,884(97.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncommented Posts</td>
<td>8,816(2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Comment Per Post</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1: Venn Diagram for different links distribution
3. Failure and comments

In this section we will give our understanding and definition of failure in blogs. Blogroll links form a quite static network, and Post Links, do not have the contribution of comments. To model the failure phenomenon we introduce 5 different categories of comments in the following:

Category I. Two (or more) bloggers get involved in discussions. One comments on a posting of the other and vice versa. This blogger might lose her audience if she delays in responding her friends. Fig. 2 (a) shows an instance.

Category II. A Blogger puts comments for other bloggers, but does not receive any comments subsequently. As a result, this blogger might stop commenting on other blogs’ postings. An example of this category is shown in Fig. 2 (b).

Category III. A blogger receives many comments, where she rarely leaves comments herself. These are several well-known bloggers who write postings that many people read and comment. A sample is illustrated in Fig. 2 (c). The blogger receives comments nearly 8 times as many as the comments he leaves for others in a period of time.

Category IV. The number of comments left and received for a blogger in this category are correlated which is the main motivation for that blogger to involve in the social aspects of blogspace. A sample of such blogs is given in Fig. 2 (d).

Category V. A blogger neither receives comments, nor does she tend to place comments on others’ posts. She might have even banned the commenting possibility on her blog. We do not consider this type in our study.

We assume that bloggers start from a blog and follow a series of links to reach a desired blog. So we assume there is no random visit by typing the URL address. Also we assume a constant percentile of readers leave comments and each comment is followed by a link to commenter’s blog. Hence, the number of comments could be a good representative for the number of readers and thus visitors of that blog. We do not consider this type in our study.

4. Future work

We believe, there is a vast area for future work in this field. Our future works are twofold. First we would like to provide a formal definition for failure along with a game theory-based model the address failure phenomenon in blogs. Second we would like to study failure triggers and to extract relevant features to classify failures based on them.

References