The Dynamics of Web-Based Community Safety Groups: Lessons learned from the Nation of Neighbors

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Nation of Neighbors: Online Neighborhood Watch

- Citizens create and join online communities. Issues report and get update on neighborhood crimes. Law enforcement communicate with community members.
- Visual analytics on the community data: communities as networks of members and their activities.
- ManyNets: visual analytics tool for simultaneous multiple network analysis.

Activities in Communities

- Newly formed communities have more Invitation activity to recruit new members.
- Crime reports keep members interested. Active and bigger communities have more reports.

Members and Leadership

- Each row is activities by the leaders from each community. Last four rows indicate some leaders became inactive after a while. Most communities have only one leader, except for Shannondale with two leaders.

Successful communities have a few members with significantly higher activity: we identify them as the Leaders. Existence of leaders increases participation of members and growth of community. Leadership emerges from citizens, not necessarily from Law-Enforcement officials.

Comparing Communities

- ManyNets network table view for NON communities. Each row is a social network of an online community created on NON, columns are metrics for the communities. The Node column shows the number of members. The activity type distribution column shows their activities distributed over 5 types: sending invitation, accepting invitation, post and reply in the forum and publish reports. The number of each type of activity is shown in separate columns. The distribution of activities over time is shown in the distribution column activity_date.

Community over Time

- Watch-Jefferson county community: each row is activities in one month. Initially a lot of invitations, gradually crime Reports became most prevalent activity.

Distribution of Activity type

- In the aggregated statistics (left) of all the communities Invitation is the most common activity. In highly active communities (right) more Reports are posted.

www.cs.umd.edu/hcil/NON

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