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An exploratory study of the videoblogger's community

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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY
OF THE
VIDEObLOGGER'S COMMUNITY

By

JOHN W. WARMBRODT

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-ROLLA
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN INFORMATION SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

2007

Approved by

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ABSTRACT

Videoblogs (vlogs) have emerged as a new form of virtual community. The goal of this study was to explore and understand the videoblogger community by studying the community's structure and the motivations of vloggers. A social network analysis of the linking patterns of 74 personal vloggers was performed. Open-ended interviews with 13 personal vloggers in the sample were performed as well. In general, the results indicate that the vlogging community is highly decentralized and exhibits a core/periphery structure, indicating that the group consists of a core group of active participants and a peripheral group of significantly less active participants. In addition, the results indicate that the characteristics of the vlogging community are similar to text blogging in a number of ways, including the community's highly interactive and social nature. However, results also indicate that the rich nature of the communication afforded by the video medium allows for a more personal, intimate, and empathetic interaction. Further, the low barrier to entry enabled by inexpensive tools and web distribution is an important motivational factor for vloggers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. MOTIVATION

Blogs are journal based web sites that typically use content management tools which allow the authors to post contents on the websites (Gordon, 2006). The number of blogs has increased significantly in the last few years. According to Technorati , a blog tracking website, there are approximately 86.4 million blogs as of June 2007 (Technorati, 2007). Blogs are intrinsically social, as they reveal the blogger's personality, interests, and points of view (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2004); they also provides a platform for the bloggers to interact with their readers and other bloggers. Therefore, blogs that share similar interests, views, or opinions are often inter-connected, forming a virtual community among the bloggers.

Video blogs (or vlogs) are blogs where each post is a video. Although the posts may also include text, providing context for the video, the focus of each post is a video. Vlogs have become increasingly popular over the recent years. In January of 2005, Mefedia - a web site that is a directory of video blogs - listed 617 vlogs. As of January 2007, this number had increased to 20,913 (Sinton, 2007).

The use of videos allows the video bloggers (vloggers) to express their opinions/views and interact with their viewers more directly and interactively. As stated by Miles (2003), “[vlogs] are less about consumption (watching others' content) than exploring models for authorship and production, ... it is the ability to participate as communicative peers that is much more significant and viable for distributed networks than our reconstitution into new consumers” (Miles, 2003). Most vloggers look to other vloggers and friends for feedback and support (Luers, 2007). Luers (2007) also identified a few social needs fulfilled by vlogging: being connected, finding validation for one's experience and ideas, and being a producer as well as a consumer (Luers, 2007). It appears then, that Vloggers interactions with one another form the foundation of the vlogger community.

As vlogs are becoming increasingly popular, their potential business applications can not be overlooked. Vlogs can not only serve as web based journals for everyday users, but also can be used by businesses to directly communicate with their customers or

promote new products. For example, traditional media outlet ABC News in January 2007, signed Amanda Congdon, who became popular as host of the highly popular video blog Rocketboom, to host a video blog on ABC News (Holahan, 2006). As a new form of blogs, vlogs use rich media and allow for more direct interactions, therefore, have great potential for business applications.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTION

Despite the increasing importance of vlogs, little academic research has been done to study the structure of the vloggers' community, or the interactions among vloggers. As the a major motivational factor for vlogging is to interact with other vloggers (Miles, 2003), it is very important to study the social network of this new type of virtual community and identify the structure of the community. Specifically, I set out to answer the following questions: 1) what is the structure of the vloggers' community?; and 2) How and why do people vlog?

1.3. RESEARCH APPROACH

The research consisted of two studies. The first study is a quantitative analysis of the social network of a vloggers' community using social network analysis; the second study is a qualitative study, with the aim of exploring how and why vloggers vlog.

This research investigates how personal vloggers interact with each other in the context of their vlogs. In this study, hyperlinks among vloggers served to represent connections. Since vlogs are the primary point of interaction, they provide an ideal way to gain a deeper understanding of the structure of the personal vlogger community. The study was conducted using a well known vlogger directory site VlogDIR (vlogdir.com) where vloggers voluntarily opt-in to a certain category of the directory. The sample used in this research, was a list of video bloggers in the personal video blogger category.

1.4. THESIS OVERVIEW

The rest of the thesis is organized as follows:

- Section 2: Literature Review. This section provides an overview of previous studies on various forms of virtual communities and focuses specifically on blogs and vlogs.
- Section 3: Study 1: Social Network Analysis and Applications. This section describes the method, data collection procedures, research results, and discussion of the social network analysis on the vloggers' community.
- Section 4: Study 2: Qualitative Study. This section contains the method, results, and discussion of the qualitative study of vloggers.
- Section 5: Limitations. This section lists some of the limitations of the present study.
- Section 6: Conclusion. The conclusion briefly summarizes findings and implications, as well as potential work for the future, which builds on this research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. VIRTUAL COMMUNITY

Virtual communities have been defined many ways. One of the first and more general definitions is that they are “social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on public discussion long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace” (Rheingold, 1993). Other researchers such as Preece (2000) have defined virtual communities as follows: social interaction, a shared purpose, a common set of expected behaviors, some form of computer system which both mediates and facilitates communication (Preece, 2000). Whittaker (Whittaker, Isaacs, & O'Day, 1997) proposed that virtual communities share the following characteristics:

- Members have a shared goal, interest, need, or activity that provides the primary reason for belonging to the community.
- Members engage in repeated active participation and there are often intense interactions, strong emotional ties, and shared activities occurring between the participants.
- Members have access to shared resources and there are policies for determining access to those resources.
- Reciprocity of information, support and services between members.
- A shared context (social conventions, language, protocols).

Gupta and Kim (2004) summarized many definitions of virtual communities and identified four key components of a virtual community: community, location, bonding, and a shared objective or purpose (Gupta & Hee-Woong, 2004). They explained each component as follows:

- The community is the members of the virtual community. The members are not physically located in one place like traditional communities such as neighborhoods, towns, or regions. Virtual communities are more concerned with human relationships like in relational communities such as hobby groups or religious organizations.

- Location - virtual communities can be thought of as a place where people can develop and maintain social and economic relationships and explore new opportunities (Wang, Yu, & Fesenmaier, 2002). In addition, discussions about commitment, identity, conflict resolution, tensions between the collectives and the individual, and negotiation of community boundaries can be conducted.
- Bonding - The members of a virtual community have a sense of membership either formally or informally. They also form personal relationships with other members in the community (Sproull & Faraj, 1997) and sometimes they become addicted to the community (Hiltz & Wellman, 1997). Gupta and Kim (2004) note that such commitment to community is the notion of bonding (Gupta & Hee-Woong, 2004).
- Shared objective or purpose. Virtual communities are formed around a primary purpose which may vary from enjoyment such as in a fantasy gaming community to information and knowledge sharing, to building relationships or transacting (Armstrong & Hagel, 1996).

Gutpa and Kim (2004) concluded that virtual communities can be basically defined as the groups of like-minded strangers who interact predominantly online to form relationships, share knowledge, have fun or engage in economic transactions (Gupta & Hee-Woong, 2004).

2.1.1. Differences between Virtual Communities and Virtual Groups or Teams. Virtual communities are different than virtual teams or groups. According to Li (2004), virtual communities are different in the following ways: 1) they focus on relationship development and people do not have to remain in the group. In contrast, virtual teams are formed to solve specific problems or tasks. 2) “virtual communities are spontaneously created by people with similar interests” (Li, 2004). Virtual teams and groups on the other hand are created by specific organizations or companies. 3) Virtual communities can last an indefinite amount of time, as long as there are people with continued shared interests that stay in the community. Virtual teams or groups, in contrast, disperse after the original goal that formed the group is completed.

2.1.2. Types of Virtual Communities. Various forms of virtual communities exist through different types of computer-mediated communication technologies (CMCs). Originally there were newsgroups, listservs, multi-user dungeons, bulletin board systems, and internet relay chat. Later, they were found on websites that offered forums and other means of user interactions. Growth of online communities has been enormous over the years. A report by the Pew Internet and American Life project found that an estimated 90 million people have participated in a virtual community in 2001 (Horrigan, 2001).

Lazar and Preece (Lazar & Preece, 1998) classified online communities based on:

- Attributes and processes of virtual communities such as shared goal or interest, shared activities among members, access to shared resources, member support, social conventions, language or protocols and population size.
- The software that supports them such as listservs, newsgroups, bulletin boards, internet relay chat, multi-user dungeons or a mixture of software technologies.
- Relationship to physical communities. Virtual communities can resemble a physical community, be somewhat like one, or be completely different. Some virtual communities are entirely based on physical communities like an electronic village. Other virtual communities are somewhat based on physical communities like the hobby-based communities including those for sports, teams or collectors. And others are purely online communities where members prefer anonymity or would like to take on a different identity like role playing communities and support communities.
- Sociological concept of boundedness. Virtual communities can be tightly bound such as those within the intranet of a company where members were only employees of that company. They can also be loosely bound like most internet communities which anyone in the world can participate in.

Armstrong and Hagel (Armstrong & Hagel, 1996) categorized virtual communities into four types based on consumer needs that are fulfilled by virtual communities:

- Communities of transaction. These communities primarily facilitate buying and selling of products and services and deliver information related to those

transactions. These are not traditional communities, but rather members interact to consult and seek input with other members on purchases such as buying a new car or choosing a dentist.

- Communities of interest. These bring together participants who interact extensively with each other on specific topics. The Motley Fool and gardening forums such as GardenWeb are examples of these communities.
- Communities of fantasy. Members in these communities seek to create new environments, personalities, or stories. They can also explore new identities in the imaginary worlds of fantasy. Real identities are not important in these fantasy communities.
- Communities of relationships. These are formed around certain intense life experiences such as death, cancer, or divorce. Participation consists of sharing these experiences and is often very intense and can lead to the formation of deep personal connections

Blogs are all based upon similar content management software and bloggers usually have common goals and interests. Therefore, based on the above categorization, blogs can be viewed as communities of interests.

Rheingold (1993) found that the primary motivation of virtual communities is to meet people and possibly expand circles of friends (Rheingold, 1993). As compared to physical communities, blogs provide a way to socialize with others but also maintain a distance from others. Kiesler (1986) observed that unlike physical communities, virtual communities can break down societal and organizational barriers (Kiesler, 1986). She found that people ignore traditional hierarchical organizational boundaries if there is strong mutual interest in a particular subject. Once people get to know each other on the basis of their communication within the virtual community, people can broaden the relationships or move them offline.

In other communities such as Internet relay chat, Kiesler (1986) found that people are more likely to lower their inhibitions online with anonymity and in the absence of social context cues (Kiesler, 1986). Those that are usually shy have been shown to speak up online while those that may never shout or insult others in real life may do so freely

online. Also, usually users of IRC self-disclose about their serious problems in real life without reserve (Reid, 1996).

Some have proposed that virtual communities lead to disconnection with others (Rheingold, 1993). While virtual communities may influence friend seeking in the physical community where the person lives, it has been found that people can form strong bonds in virtual communities they are a regular part of. Regular users of Internet Relay Chat (IRC) for example have become addicted to it, form close friendships, and even fall in love and get married in real life (Rheingold, 1993).

2.1.3. Identifying Virtual Communities Online. Virtual communities have received considerable attentions from researchers in various disciplines. The following table (Table 2.1) summarizes prior literature on virtual communities.

Table 2.1 - Studies of Virtual Communities

Source	Context	Major Findings
Rheingold (1993)	Virtual communities such as the WELL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people use various forms of virtual communities such as IRC, MUDs • virtual communities are usually much different than real communities. • People take on new roles and interact in different worlds • Anonymity allows for communication with diminished inhibitions.
Lazar & Preece (1998)	Classification of virtual communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual communities can be classified based upon four characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attributes

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting software ○ Relationship to physical communities ○ Boundedness
Horrigan (2001)	Prevalence of virtual communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 84% of internet users or 90 million people have participated in a virtual community to connect to distant others and local community
Roberts (1998)	Newsgroups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsgroups were found to be virtual communities based on sense of belonging to their group. • This sense of belonging was determined by the amount of time and effort put into the groups.

2.2. BLOGS

Blogs are journal based web sites that typically use content management tools (Gordon, 2006). These software tools allow their authors to quickly post new content to their blogs in what has been described as “pushbutton publishing for the people.” (Schiano, Nardi, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2004) There are many blogs on the World Wide Web today. Technorati, a blog tracking company is currently tracking 86.4 million blogs as of June 2007 (Technorati, 2007). Blogs are intrinsically social, as they reveal the blogger’s personality, interests, and points of view (Nardi, Schiano, & Gumbrecht, 2004).

A blog is a series of web pages with several dated entries. Usually these entries are in reverse chronological order with the latest entry first. (Bar-Ilan, 2004; Walker, 2003; Wikipedia, 2007a). The term “blog” was coined in 1997 when Dave Winer wrote his reflections and commentaries online (Nardi, Schiano, & Gumbrecht, 2004; Schiano, Nardi, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2004; Shen, Sun, Yang, & Chen, 2006; Tepper, 2003). However, blogs have been around for longer than that (Tepper, 2003). Some blogs are merely lists of other web pages the author finds interesting (Blood, 2004). Other blogs are

commentaries that focus on a topic or range of topics. Many blogs however are personal journals of the authors. When blogs link to each other, they can create virtual communities (Blanchard, 2004).

2.2.1. Characteristics of Blogs. Blogs primarily consist of text posts made by the author and then associated comments made by the audience. However, blogs can also contain hyperlinks, graphics, audio recordings, video, and other rich media. Most of the formatting and success of blogs we know of today is the result of blogging software technologies. Software such as Blogger, Xanga, or LiveJournal made blogging much easier and therefore more widely accessible (Blood, 2004; Chau & Xu, 2007; Nardi, Schiano, & Gumbrecht, 2004; Tepper, 2003). Blogging technology also introduced many of the features that are found in modern day blogs. For instance, modern blogs usually have the capability for the readers to leave public comments on each blog entry. Also, blogging technologies created innovations such as blogrolls, permalinks, and trackback URLs.

Blogrolls are lists of blogs that the blogger reads and also other links of interest to the blogger (Bar-Ilan, 2004).

Permalinks are a permanent URL address for each blog posting. Permalinks are important because they allow other bloggers to reference a specific blog posting. Communications between bloggers was much easier as a result (Blood, 2004; Tepper, 2003).

Trackback URLs were introduced by the blogging software Movable Type and allow bloggers to “ping” other blogs. This places a link to the blogger’s post in the entry they have just referenced (Blood, 2004). Having trackback URLs allows bloggers to know which blogs are linking to them, and thus eases communication (Blood, 2004).

2.2.2. Motivations of Bloggers. A considerable amount of research has been conducted within the last few years on the topic of blogs. Blogs are first and foremost a social activity (Nardi, Schiano, & Gumbrecht, 2004). Researchers have found numerous motivations for blogging. For example, Lindahl and Blount found that there are two basic blog styles: filters and journals (Lindahl & Blount, 2003). The filter style is a collection of

links to other Web sites. The journal style is an online personal diary with dated entries. Nardi et al (2004) found that personal bloggers write because they were documenting their life, providing commentary and opinions, expressing deeply felt emotions, articulating ideas through writing, and forming and maintaining community forums (Nardi, Schiano, & Gumbrecht, 2004). They also found that personal bloggers continue to blog usually due to “peer pressure” of the audience wanting to see regular posts.

2.2.3. Beyond Text Blogs. Not all blogs are text based. Bloggers also add many photos to their blog entries to create what is called a photoblog. In this case text accompanies the photos, but the photos are the primary focus of the blog (Photoblogs.org). Some bloggers have gone as far as creating audio files typically called podcasts (Wikipedia, 2007b). These posts have a text portion that describes the audio file and the file can be downloaded and played on a portable MP3 player such as Apple Inc’s Ipod. A third type of blog is the videoblog or vlog. We will focus on video blogs shortly.

2.3. VLOGS

Vlogs, as mentioned before, are a type of blog that consists of videos as the primary media within each post. These videos are typically no longer than five or ten minutes in length (Luers, 2007). Vlogging initially became popular due to the decreasing barriers of entry of internet video publishing. Much of the initial success of vlogs comes from video hosting websites such as blip.tv, which offer free hosting. These video hosting sites allowed vloggers to combine current blogging technology with hosted videos to create vlogs. The videos posted to the vlog usually start with a title card that lets the viewer know what they are watching. Some vlogs use a format very similar to television shows. Since vlogs use existing blog technology, they still usually have text comments that the viewers can leave.

Vlogging has become increasingly popular over the recent years. In January of 2005 Mefedia, a web site that is a directory of video bloggers (vloggers) had 617 vlogs. As of January 2007, Mefedia.com listed 20,913 vlogs (Sinton, 2007).

Unlike traditional media such as broadcast television, it appears that a major motivation for vlogging is to receive feedback and support from other vloggers and find friendships in vloggers' community (Luers, 2007). Vlogging helps to fulfill some social needs of the vloggers, such as feeling connected, finding validation for one's experience and ideas, and being a producer as well as a consumer (Luers, 2007). Therefore, each vlogger's interactions with other vloggers are the foundation of the vlogger community.

2.3.1. Types of Vlogs. There are many different forms of vlogs. Some vlog genres are diary, experimental, documentary, and mash-up (Luers, 2007). There are three main types of vlogs: personal vlogs, news shows, and entertainment orientated. Personal vloggers talk about or even share their life experiences captured by a video camera and are thus more of a personal media than a television show. Besides personal vlogs about the vlogger's life, there are news shows, which are informal newscasts on a wide variety of topics. An popular example of a news show is Rocketboom (Rocketboom.com). These shows are somewhat similar to a newscast found on TV, but are more informal and experimental. Also there are vlogs that exist for purely entertainment reasons such as Ask a Ninja (askaninja.com), or a sitcom format such as the Carol and Steve at show (http://www.stevegarfield.blogspot.com/videoblog/carol_and_steve_show) (Clayfield, 2007). These newscast and entertainment style of vlogs are not something usually found in blogs due to limitations of the text based format.

2.3.2. Research on Vlogs. Although vlogs are becoming increasingly popular, little research has been done on vlogs.

Some researchers looked have examined vlogging technologies. For example, Parker and Pfeiffer's (2005) have investigated ways to make vlogs more interactive than just having videos posted on a blog site (Parker & Pfeiffer, 2005). Miles (2006) identified current limitations of vlogs and how these limitations could be addressed with future technologies (Miles, 2006).

Other researchers have examined the difference between vlogging and other traditional medias (e.g., traditional television and independent films) and how anyone can

cheaply author video about whatever they desire with only a household camera, computer, and internet connection (Clayfield, 2007; Luers, 2007; Miles, 2007).

Table 2.2 - Studies of Blogs & Vlogs

Source	Context	Major Findings
Nardi et al. (2004a)	Motivations of personal bloggers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal bloggers blog in order to update others on activities and whereabouts, express opinions to influence others, seek others' opinions and feedback, think by writing, and release emotional tension.
Blanchard (2004)	Blogs as virtual communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A blog at the center created and destroyed the network. Virtual community did not last after author left. • Users felt in the community if they posted lots of comments. • Blogs are not virtual communities by themselves. They require a certain number of people interacting and reliance on more than one author to become a virtual community.
Mefedia.com (2007)	Vlogger statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vlogs have grown from 617 to 20,913 in two years.
Luers (2007)	Vlogs as new form of cinema	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vloggers have entertainment and network values in mind when they vlog and are considered consumer cinema

Clayfield (2007)	Authors of vlogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vlogging is cheap and allows everyday people to create new media. Anyone can vlog and become a producer
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Most studies on blogs focus on blogs in general. Clearly there is a gap in the literature in studying video blogging and personal blogging. To address the gaps in the knowledge of vlogs, I conducted a research examining the structure of the vloggers' community and the motivations of vloggers.

3. STUDY 1: A QUANTITATIVE SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS OF A SAMPLE OF PERSONAL VLOGS

3.1. OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

Social network theory was first attributed to J. Barnes in 1954 (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). It focuses on the interactions between social entities such as people, corporations, or other organizations so as to form a complete network (Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

The main components of a social network are nodes and links. Networks are made up of nodes, which are the social entities mentioned before. The nodes are connected by links, which are the relationships between nodes. These networks allow researchers to understand the structure of the relationships among the actors (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Researchers have known for years that an individual's relationship with others has a large effect on social resources and many other important things about them.

Social network analysis allows researchers to visualize and conduct mathematical analysis on the network. Social network analysis allows for the identification of central nodes, which can have roles such as leaders, hubs, or gatekeepers. It also allows identification of subgroups in a network where nodes are strongly connected to each other. Visualization helps to identify the overall structure of a network.

3.1.1. Centrality and Centralization. Measurements are used in social network analysis to determine the important actors in the network (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The most common measure of importance is centrality.

Centrality refers to the importance of individual actors and centralization refers to the network as a whole. Centrality is based on the concept that "actors who are most important or the most prominent are usually located in strategic locations within the network" (Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

The most centralized network exhibits a star structure. A star structure can also be called a hub-and-spoke network. A star has one or two nodes in the center surrounded by many nodes with few or no other connections connected to the center nodes (Kumar, Novak, & Tomkins, 2006).

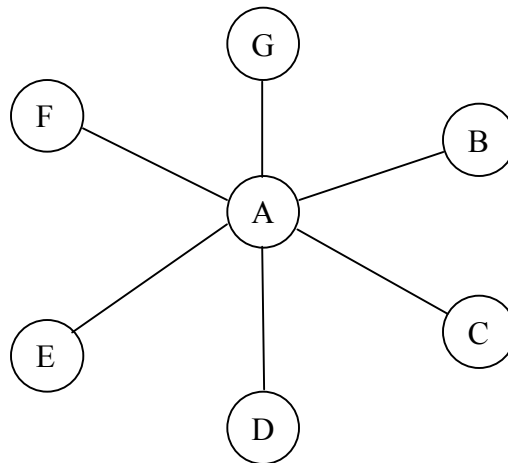


Figure 3.1 - Freeman's Star Network

In the star network depicted in figure 3.1, Node A is more central than the other nodes and the other nodes have equal centrality. Therefore, a star network exemplifies a centralized network.

Ahuja and Carley (Ahuja, Galletta, & Carley, 2003) noted that a centralized network such as the star network may reflect an uneven distribution of knowledge such that knowledge is concentrated in the focal points of the network. They also found that centralized organizations are more efficient for routine tasks. However, as Krebs and Holley (2004) pointed out, a star network leads to a single point of failure if the node linking every other together is removed (Krebs & Holley, 2002).

Figure 3.2 represents a prototypical decentralized network.

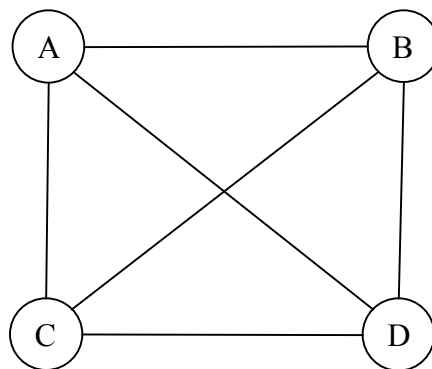


Figure 3.2 - A Decentralized Network

The nodes in this network have equal centrality. Therefore, no node has an advantage over other nodes.

3.1.2. Core/Periphery Structure. Another social network structure is a core/periphery network. The prototypical core/periphery structure is a dense, connected core surrounded by a sparse, loosely connected periphery (Borgatti & Everett, 1999; Long, 2006). This structure is somewhere in between a highly central star network and a fully decentralized network (Borgatti & Everett, 2006).

One unique feature of this structure is that it cannot be subdivided into exclusive cohesive subgroups, although some actors are connected more than others (Borgatti & Everett, 1999). Also, nodes in the core are very close to each other, but are also close to the periphery. However, nodes in the periphery are relatively close to only the core. Krebs and Holley (2002) described the periphery as an open, porous boundary of the community network. They classified nodes in the periphery in three ways: 1) New to the community and with time will join the core; 2) Bridges to other communities; 3) Resources that are unique and may span other communities

Figure 3.3 shows an example of a prototypical core/periphery network where the dark nodes are the core and the lighter nodes are the periphery.

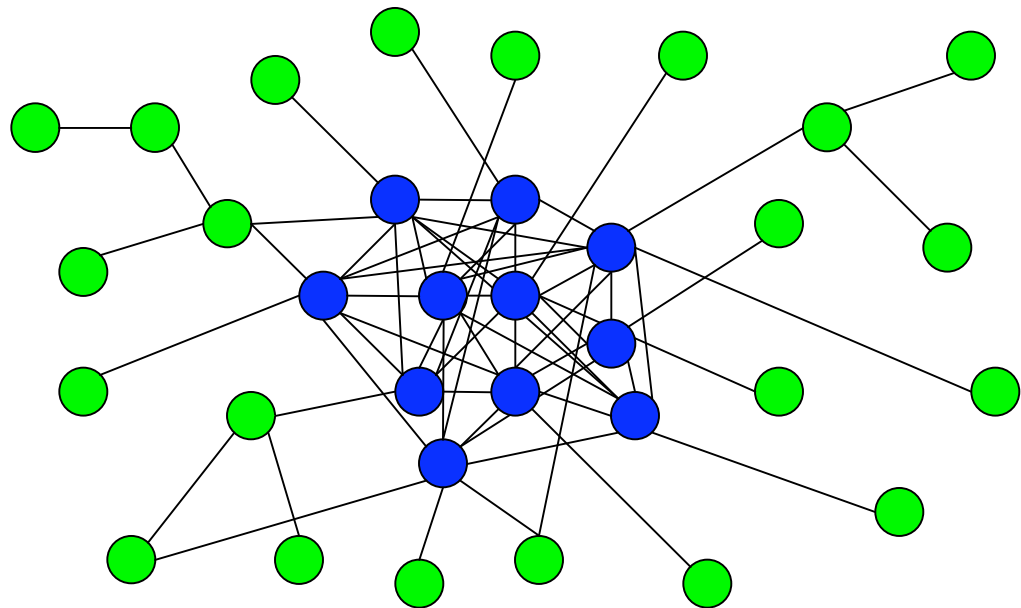


Figure 3.3 - A Core/Periphery Network

Krebs and Holley (2002) noted that this arrangement allows information to move the fastest through the network. In addition, the network becomes more robust and stable. They also noted that organizations move from a scattered structure to a core/periphery network over time. They concluded that core/periphery structure is the most efficient and sustainable network (Krebs & Holley, 2002). They warned though that too dense of a core can lead to rigidity and an activity overload.

3.1.3. Relevant Applications of Social Network Analysis. Social network analysis has been widely used to study many networks from biological networks to virtual workgroups. .

Social network Analysis has also been used to study virtual communities. A study by Long (2006) showed that open source software development teams go from a centralized hub to a core/periphery structure over time, which decreases the overall centralization of the group (Long & Siau, 2006). Chau & Xu (2007) used social network analysis to analyze the structure of online hate group blogs (Chau & Xu, 2007). Another study identified virtual communities in blogs using social network analysis measures (Chin & Chignell, 2006). Ahuja et al and Sparrowe (2001) studied performance in workgroups and found that centrality was a strong predictor of individual performance in the group (Ahuja & Carley, 1999; Sparrowe, Liden, Wayne, & Kraimer, 2001). Another study of the online social networks Yahoo!, 360, and Flickr indicated that these communities consist of singletons, a sparse middle region, and a giant component (Kumar, Novak, & Tomkins, 2006).

Table 3.1 - Studies of Relevant Social Network Analysis Applications

Source	Context	Major Findings
Chau & Xu (2006)	Exploratory study of online hate blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large but efficient network (short path length), giant component densely knit, overall decentralized

Long (2006)	Knowledge sharing in open source software development teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibit a decentralized core/periphery network. • Both centralization and core/periphery fitness significantly impact the degree of knowledge sharing which increases network performance
Chin & Chignell (2006)	Finding community in blogs using linking between blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree centrality, betweenness centrality, closeness centrality, and k-cores are good measures for identifying communities.
Ahuja et al (2003)	Individual performance in virtual R&D groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual performance can be strongly predicted by individual centrality.
Sparrowe et al (2001)	Performance of individuals and groups in social networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those with high centrality had higher performance than those with low centrality
Kumar et al (2006)	Structure and evolution of online social networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classified members into 3 categories: singletons, middle region, and giant component using degree centrality and further analyzed each group

3.2. RESEARCH METHODS

In many prior studies using social network analysis, centrality measures and core/periphery fitness were used as key structural analysis. These measures are relevant to this research as the focus of this research is to study the structure of the vloggers' community. Many centrality measures exist, but most studies choose to use simple

measures created by Freeman (Freeman, 1977). These measures are degree centrality, closeness, and betweenness.

Following is a more detailed explanation of these measures.

3.2.1. Degree Centrality. Degree centrality measures who is the most active in a network (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). This is done by measuring the number of ties to other actors within the network (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). An individual's centrality is the extent to which an individual is linked to others in the group (Ahuja, Galletta, & Carley, 2003). Ahuja noted that a node is central if it has a higher degree than others in the network. Therefore, individual centrality can serve as a measurement of how closely an individual belongs to a group.

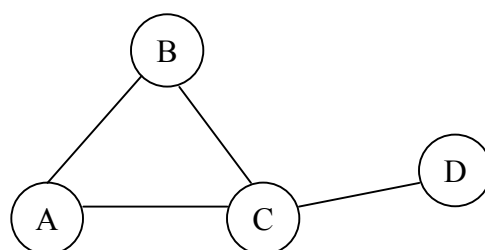


Figure 3.4 - Example Social Network

In Figure 3.4, node C has the highest degree centrality and is thus the most central because it is connected to three other nodes. Node D is peripheral and has a low degree because it is adjacent to only one other node.

According to social network theory, a large amount of interaction by an individual will not only change that individual's relative position in the network, but will also affect others positions as well. Most importantly, individuals with high centrality have higher influence and cognition in the network. Being linked to a large number of people in a network enables an individual to be more likely connected to other powerful individuals in the network. Another way of looking at degree centrality is the degree to which an individual can communicate with others directly or quickly (Borgatti, 2005). This is important in this research as degree centrality identifies those with a high number of connections with others that are likely leaders or hubs.

The major limitation of this degree centrality is that it should only be used to compare centrality scores within a single network. However, this limitation was overcome by using scores standardized for network size in my study.

3.2.2. Closeness. The next centrality measure is closeness. It is based upon distance between one actor to all other actors in a network. This measures how easy it is for one actor to be able to communicate with others in the network (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The fewer actors an actor has to go through to get to any another, the lower the actors closeness score – low scores indicate a greater degree of closeness (Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

Borgatti (2005) noted that nodes with low closeness scores have short distances from others, and so tend to receive information sooner, assuming that what flows originates from all other nodes with equal probability, and also assuming that whatever is flowing manages to travel along shortest paths. In the case of information traveling through a network, normally nodes with low closeness scores are well-positioned to obtain novel information early, when it has the most value (Borgatti, 2005).

Closeness is important to this study because it allows us to measure the efficiency of communication in the network and identify actors that can receive information from others quickly.

3.2.3. Betweenness. The last measure of centrality is betweenness. It measures how important an actor is at bridging the gap between other actors in the network (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). If a network is set up in such a way that there are no other paths that these other actors can take to communicate with each other, this actor in the middle has high importance (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Removing a node with high betweenness can disrupt the flow of information through the network and introduce fragmentation (Borgatti & Everett, 2006).

Therefore, betweenness measures the amount of network flow that a given node “controls” in the sense of being able to shut it down if necessary (Borgatti, 2005) and can show whether an individual plays the role of a broker or gatekeeper (Wang & Chen,

2004). A broker exchanges information between two other nodes and a gatekeeper withholds information from passing between nodes.

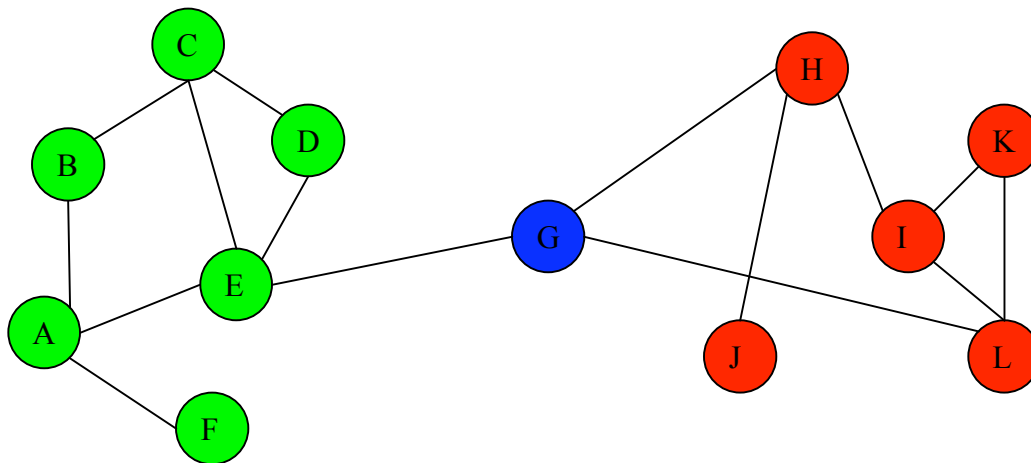


Figure 3.5 - Example of Betweenness: A Node Bridging Two Clusters of Nodes.

Notice in Figure 3.5, the “G” node has high betweenness centrality and is connecting the ABCDEF and HIJKL networks together into one big network.

3.2.4. Network Centralization. Network Centralization looks at the centrality measures at a network wide level and determines the extent to which the network exhibits a star structure. For each of Freeman’s centrality measures, a network centralization score can be calculated which indicates how centralized the network is. Network centralization is important to this research because it shows overall how centralized or decentralized the network of vloggers may be.

3.2.5. Core/Periphery. Core/Periphery is a hybrid structure that exhibits some form of centralization as a core, but also has a less centralized periphery. This structure has been found to have important implications to the communication effectiveness of networks such as online hate groups or open source software development. Thus, it is useful to include this measure in this research as vloggers may follow a similar structure. The presence of core/periphery structure is determined by fitting a social network to a

mathematical model representing a prototypical core/periphery network. A fit of .5 (50%) or greater is considered a good fit (Long & Siau, 2006).

3.3. DATA COLLECTION

3.3.1. Sample Selection. The focus of this study is to understand the network structure of vloggers' community. This study used a sample of vloggers who identified themselves as personal vloggers from VlogDIR. VlogDIR was chosen for this study due to the fact that it is a popular and reputable directory of thousands of vloggers. Vloggers voluntarily add themselves to the directory and can specify what category they fit into.

A list of personal bloggers who have registered at VlogDir was used in this study for social network analysis. The reasons for choosing personal bloggers for this study are two fold. First, using a list avoids the snowball approach in which data collection begins at one blog. Starting at one point results in an ego-centric network where the starting point is in the middle of the network and the rest of the nodes as done in some other studies (Chin & Chignell, 2006; Efimova & Hendrick, 2005). Second, similar studies have used lists of blogs as a basis sampling (Chau & Xu, 2007; Kumar, Novak, Raghaven, & Tomkins, 2004).

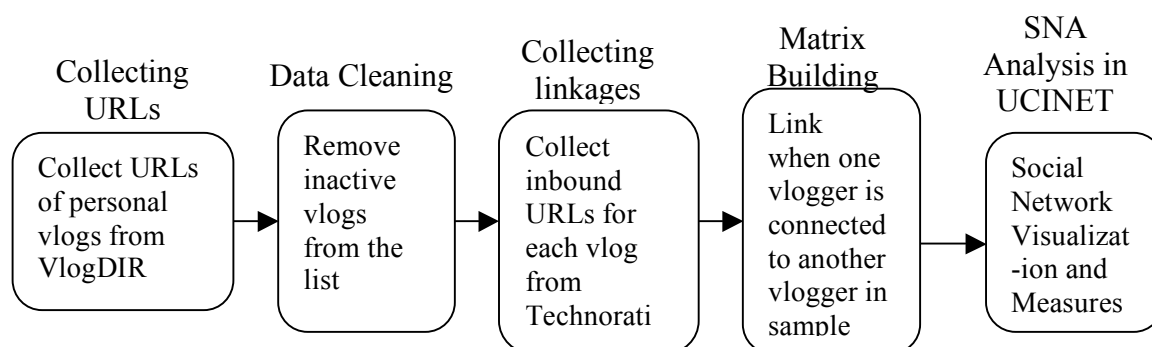


Figure 3.6 - Data Collection Process

3.3.2. Data Collection. The data collection for this study was done in a five-step process (as depicted in Figure 3.6).

1) Obtaining list from VlogDIR. This involved collecting all of the URLs of the personal vloggers listed on VlogDIR into a file. Data collection was done by writing a

computer program typically known as a spider to capture the URLs of the personal vlogger's vlogs from VlogDIR. 244 of these URLs were captured from VlogDIR's personal vlogger list.

2) These URLs were then manually cleaned to ensure they met criteria for being active vlogs. This study focuses on active personal vlogs for social network analysis, therefore, the URLs collected must meet the following criteria: 1) The URL had to be a personal vlog. This means that the vlog clearly indicates that it is about someone's life or describes its contents as personal. If these were not found, a content analysis of a video would quickly determine the subject matter of the vlog as personal or not. 2) If a URL was found to be a personal vlog, it had to have three video postings within the last three months of the time of this study. This second criteria was chosen to ensure that the personal vloggers in this study were representative of currently active vloggers that had a history of video postings.

After the data cleaning, 74 of the original 244 URLs remained in the list.

3) The cleaned URLs were used as input to Technorati, a blog tracking website, to obtain URLs of other blogs that linked to the vlogs. After the URLs from VlogDIR were cleaned with the criteria mentioned before, the URLs were entered into Technorati. Technorati collects linking interactions between bloggers. Technorati keeps track of what are known as "inbound links" or links to a blog URL. It also tracks outbound links to other blogs as one blog's inbound link is an outbound link on the other blog. For each personal vlogger's URL, all other URLs that linked to the vlogger's URL were captured. A computer program was used to automate the collection of these inbound links to each vlogger's vlog URL and store them in a database. This method of link collection proves to be much efficient than traditional methods, which rely on content analysis of each vlogger's vlog to determine the outgoing links to other pages manually. Also, Technorati only keeps track of links to other blogs, whereas a web spider would have to capture all links on a webpage whether it was a blog or not.

4) A sociomatrix was built based on the links between the vlogs that are collected. A sociomatrix is a mathematical representation of a social network that uses data placed in rows and columns to signify relationships between individuals in the network. Table

3.2 is a theoretical example of a sociomatrix that represents linking relationships for 4 individuals.

Table 3.2 - A Sociomatrix

0	A	B	C	D
A	0	1	1	1
B	1	0	0	1
C	1	0	0	0
D	1	1	0	0

In this example, a link exists between A&B, B&D, A&C, and D&A. Notice that self relationships, known as reflexive ties, are usually ignored and result in a blank diagonal line in the sociomatrix (Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

In this study, the relationships between nodes signify that one vlog is linked to another vlog. The links gathered from Technorati were examined to see if any personal vloggers from the sample (the cleaned URL list from VlogDir) had linked to other personal vloggers from the sample. If so, an indication of the link was placed into a sociomatrix. Another computer program was used to automate the generation of the sociomatrix. This sociomatrix was 74 rows by 74 columns. Links between vlogs were represented by placing 1s in the respective rows and columns of both vlogs. A social network formed this way is known as an undirected network since the direction of the link was not considered. Since we were only interested in the interactions of personal vloggers, this social network is appropriate for this study.

5) The sociomatrix was then used as the dataset for UCINET, a social network analysis software package. UCINET created the visualization of the network as well as calculated the social network measures of centrality and core/periphery fitness.

UCINET is commonly used for social network research. For example, it has been used by Chau & Xu (2006) to analyze online hate groups as well as by Long (2006) to analyze open source software development. UCINET was used in this study to calculate

the centrality and network centralization measures as well as calculate core/periphery fitness. The same calculations were performed by Chau & Xu and Long in their studies.

3.4. RESULTS

3.4.1. Social Network Graph. Figure 3.7 shows the social network of the vloggers' community. The dots are the nodes that represent the vloggers and the lines are the links between the nodes. Nodes with no links were removed from the graph. There were thirty four active nodes in this network.

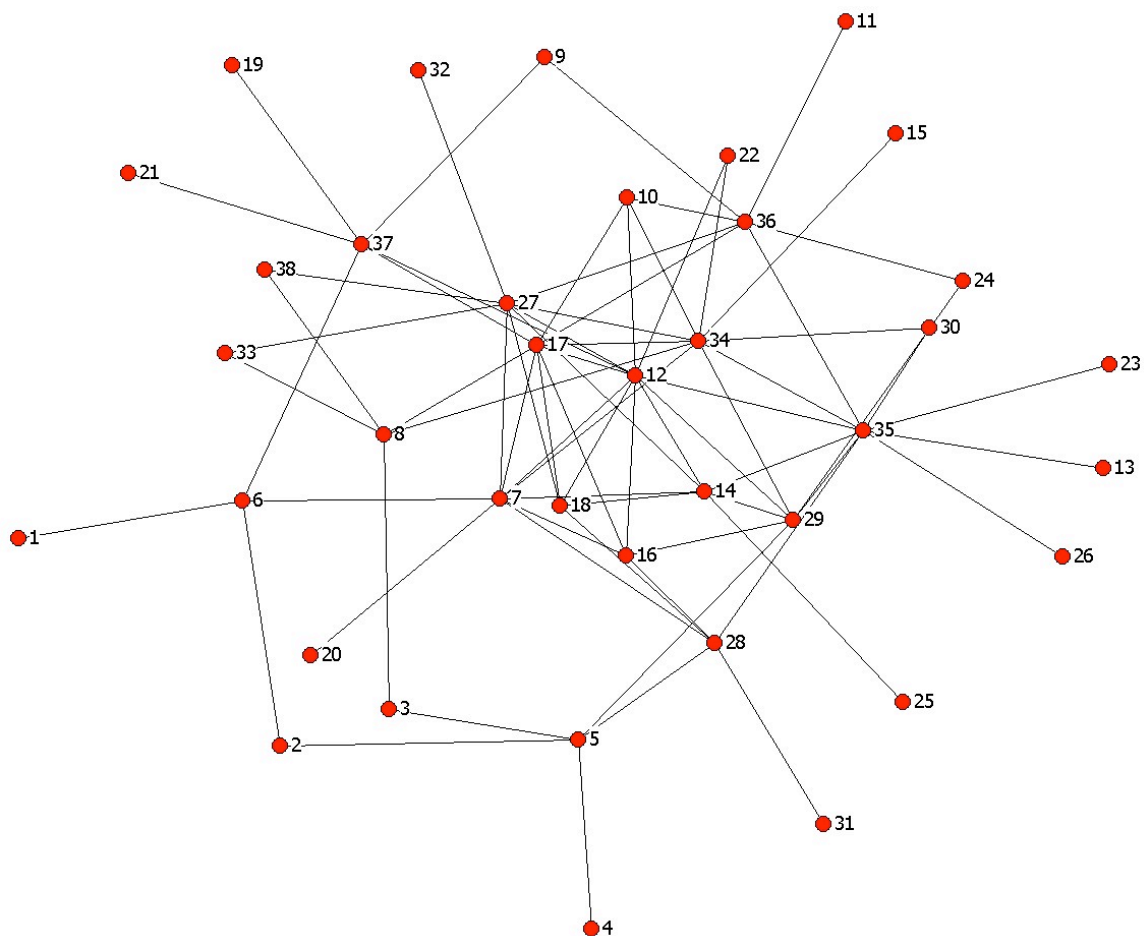


Figure 3.7 - Vlogger Social Network

3.4.2. Individual Centrality Scores. Results of centrality measurement are presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 - Individual Centrality Measures

Node #	Degree	Normalized Degree	Normalized Closeness	Normalized Betweenness
1	1	2.703	28.030	0.0
2	2	5.405	32.456	1.491
3	2	5.405	33.636	1.294
4	1	2.703	28.244	0.0
5	5	13.514	38.947	10.259
6	4	10.811	38.542	8.747
7	9	24.324	49.333	15.883
8	5	13.514	41.111	5.709
9	2	5.405	35.238	0.824
10	4	10.811	40.217	0.403
11	1	2.703	31.092	0.0
12	11	29.730	52.857	15.051
13	1	2.703	33.036	0.0
14	7	18.919	47.436	7.433
15	1	2.703	33.945	0.0
16	5	13.514	43.023	1.077
17	9	24.324	48.684	10.077
18	5	13.514	43.023	1.718
19	1	2.703	30.081	0.0
20	1	2.703	33.333	0.0
21	1	2.703	30.081	0.0
22	2	5.405	37.374	0.043
23	1	2.703	33.036	0.0
24	2	5.405	35.922	0.503
25	1	2.703	32.456	0.0

26	1	2.703	33.036	0.0
27	9	24.324	48.052	14.698
28	6	16.216	43.529	9.942
29	7	18.919	46.835	9.798
30	2	5.405	38.144	0.0
31	1	2.703	30.579	0.0
32	1	2.703	32.743	0.0
33	2	5.405	34.906	0.234
34	1	27.027	50.685	15.099
35	1	27.027	48.684	21.681
36	7	18.919	44.578	11.737
37	6	16.216	42.529	13.993
38	2	5.405	34.906	0.234

At the individual level, nodes 12, 34, 35, 27, 17, and 7 had the highest degree centrality. These nodes had a degree of 9 or higher. All of these nodes were part of the core. The core's density is rather low, resulting in a loose core. Nodes 35, 7, 34, 12, 27, and 37 had the highest betweenness centrality. These nodes had a normalized between of 13 or higher. These nodes served as bridges and connected most of the loose core together. Nodes 12, 34, 7, 17, 35, and 27 had the highest closeness centrality. These nodes had a normalize closeness of 48 or higher. These nodes were also in the core. It makes sense that degree and closeness centrality would be so high for those in the core. This same result was observed by Kumar (Kumar, Novak, Raghaven, & Tomkins, 2004) and Chin (Chin & Chignell, 2006). While I thought that those with high betweenness would connect those in the periphery to the core, they actually served to connect the core together.

3.4.3. Network Centrality Scores. The network centrality is presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 - Network Centrality Measures

Network Degree	Normalized Network Degree	Network Betweenness	Network Closeness
20.27%	1.80%	17.46%	30.05%

According to Long and Siau (2006), the centrality measures are relatively low. All of the centrality measures were less than 50% which is the midpoint between a centralized and decentralized network (Long & Siau, 2006). The highest level of centralization was exhibited when calculated using closeness. This means that overall nodes had a higher level of closeness than degree or betweenness.

3.4.4. Core/Periphery Analysis. Results of core/periphery analysis are shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 - Core/Periphery Analysis Results

Nodes in Core	Nodes in Periphery
7 12 14 16 17 18 27 28 29 34 35 36	1 2 3 4 5 6 8 9 10 11 13 15 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 30 31 32 33 37 38

Final Core/Periphery Fitness: 0.544

Nodes 7,12,14,16,17,18,27,28,29,34,35, and 36 were in the core. The rest of the nodes were in the periphery. These determinations were derived by shifting the nodes between the core and periphery until the maximum Pearson's correlation between the observed data and an ideal core/periphery network was achieved. Overall, this network exhibits a core/periphery structure since a fitness score over .50 indicates a good fit of the core/periphery model.

3.5. DISCUSSION OF STUDY ONE

The results of social network analysis on personal bloggers in VlogDIR suggest that vloggers' community exhibits a core/periphery structure. It has over a 50% fit to core/periphery structure. This network structure is similar to those found by Long, Chin, and Efimova & Hendricks (Chin & Chignell, 2006; Efimova & Hendrick, 2005; Kumar, Novak, Raghaven, & Tomkins, 2004; Long, 2006). The core/periphery structure indicates that no individual or small group of individuals has a communication advantage over everyone else. Also the network is highly decentralized with a highest network centrality score of 30.5%.

However, the results of this study should be generalized with caution. The social network is based upon vlogger linking data, which is not the only way vloggers communicate and interact with each other. Vloggers not only list themselves in directories such as VlogDIR, but also meet each other in real life at events such as VloggerCon (vloggercon.com). Thus, traditional power inferred due to a central network position does not have much of an influence in the vlogger network.

This quantitative study answers the first research question of this thesis, that is, what is the structure of the vlogger community. Although the results of social network analysis indicate the network structure to be core/periphery, it didn't address why the vloggers' community exhibited this structure. A qualitative study on vloggers will provide more in-depth information on motivations of vloggers and the underlying reasons for the core/periphery structure in their community. The qualitative study will also aid us in understanding why and how some vloggers were in the core of the social network.

4. STUDY 2: QUALITATIVE STUDY OF VLOGGERS

4.1. RESEARCH METHOD

4.1.1. Participants. Thirteen participants were selected for open-ended phone interviews following the purposive sampling technique (Cooper & Emory, 1995). Vloggers who have the highest degree centrality scores in the network were selected for interviews as these vloggers are most active in the network.

4.1.2. Interview questions. In addition to general demographic information such as age, gender, and occupation, I asked each vlogger interviewed the following questions.

- When did you start vlogging?
- How much time do you spend watching vlogs?
- How often do you post vlogs?
- How do you see your role in the Vlogger community?
- What types of vlogs do you like to watch?
- Why do you vlog?
- Do you think it's important for the vlogger community for people to watch and comment on other people's vlogs? Explain.
- Is it important to you that others watch and comment on your vlog? Explain.

4.1.3. Data Collection and Measurement. Interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. The data was then coded into themes following guidelines on open coding suggested by (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Open coding is “the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in the data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It is performed by first breaking the data into concepts about the phenomenon being studied. During this process, data is dimensionalized if possible to show the varying possibilities of a property. Then, categories are formed by logically grouping the concepts together.

4.2. QUALITATIVE RESULTS

The results of open coding were a list of concepts, which were then categorized into four themes. Each theme was created by logically grouping the specific concepts together into a broader category. The themes identified from this study include: motivations for vlogging, reasons to choose video as a medium for blogging, characteristics of vloggers, and interactions in the community. Table 4.1 provides a summary of categories, concepts, and supporting quotations from the interviews.

Table 4.1 - Interview Results

Categories	Concepts	Data
Motivation for Vlogging	Vlogging as a hobby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“It’s just fun to do and interesting hobby for me”</i> • <i>“Vlogging is a very time consuming hobby”</i>
	Understanding other people’s lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I’m really most interested in people’s stories about their personal lives”</i> • <i>“Mostly I like to watch things where I can learn something about somebody’s life rather than something that’s experimental like people that are doing special effects or something.”</i>

	Documenting personal life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“My vlog is my life story about my career change and going to nursing school at 42. I do an autobiographical and informational vlog specifically about nursing”</i>
	Sharing personal life with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I had a friend in Germany and at the end of 2004 started making videos for him and showing him how my life was here in the states in Michigan”</i> • <i>“I started it because I had videos that I took on a trip to Australia and wanted to share them with a friend and I was looking for some place to put it where she could watch it”</i>
	Seeking attention from others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I love to be on camera and like for other people to watch”</i> • <i>“Ever since I was a little kid I liked attention. I get attention and I like being in the center. I like being kind of the center of the attention.”</i>

	Artistic and creative expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I want to do something creative/artistic”</i> • <i>“I feel like there’s this certain amount of art to video blogging. It’s sort of my artistic outlet.”</i>
	Telling a story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I do it sometimes to tell a story to communicate with people”</i>
	Sharing environments /Cultures with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I try my best to share Japanese/Asian culture, food, moments, language, and what it is like to be an American outside of America”</i> • <i>“I do the show because it feels go to me and I love sharing the beautiful spirit of Hawaii and offering people an alternative to their stressful day. It’s just my gift, my offering to others”</i>

	Making friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I have made friends all across the world, especially folks that have a genuine interest in Japan often keep coming back to my site, as do other videobloggers”</i> • <i>“I would say that I have far more friends now online than offline. A lot of people that do not understand the internet are like you’re always at your computer, your cutting yourself off from the rest of the world and your just becoming isolated. I have found the opposite to be true.”</i>
	Expressing personal opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“And sometimes I do it just to express an opinion”</i> • <i>“I do it for personal expression sometimes”</i>
	Connecting with other vloggers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Mostly it’s just to connect with people”</i> • <i>“That’s one amazing experience and it’s just in the social connection between people”</i>

Reasons to choose video as a medium for blogging	Highly Interactive Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Video blogging is like this great medium for communication between people.”</i> • <i>“Being able to give feedback on the feedback is sort of the neat natural communicative thing about vlogging in general”</i> • <i>“One of the things about this community is that it is interactive and different from the regular TV. So, I’m watching people’s stuff and they are watching mine”</i>
	Allowing for real conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Online, you’re able to as you know have a real dialogue with people all over the world and that was something that was really interesting to me”</i> • <i>“All of us have something to contribute to the conversation and being able to allow that part of the conversation.”</i>

	<p>Consumer created media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I just like the fact that people have to do something intelligent and communicate and have a voice and not have to go through like studios or TV stations”</i> • <i>“It’s so awesome to make media and that your media consumption is made by people you know”</i>
	<p>More features available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I’m able to do more with videos than I can with writing”</i>
	<p>Easier to use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“[Referring to public access] I was always frustrated that I couldn’t get anything on the air unless I did a half hour episode. Like I had 3 of them in a week and I had a whole calendar of production schedules.”</i> • <i>“I love being able to just turn on the camera and make something”</i>

	More Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“When you meet them it’s like you know them because you have seen their facial expression and you’ve heard their tone of voice”</i> • <i>“You get to see people’s spaces. You see their environment and even if you don’t get to see that person, you get to see something visual that they created. I think you get a lot more kind of rich personal information than you would get from a text blog and so you create a situation where you tend to know the person, you feel closer to them than you would with just written or even audio kinds of blogs”</i>
Characteristics of vloggers	Previous video experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I came from old media stuff. I was a producer of a bunch of little films and documentary films and I just happened to know the technology was there and I’ve latched on to it”</i> • <i>“I was kind of playing around making movies probably for a couple of years before I put it online”</i>

	<p>Previous blogging experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I have been blogging for awhile and then yeah, I just started posting videos in 2005”</i> • <i>“I have been blogging”</i>
	<p>Time commitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I used to spend a huge amount of time watching video blogs. It was basically 2-3 hours a day. More recently I haven’t had much time because I graduated from school and I work.”</i> • <i>“I recently got married and for a lack of a better expression, marriage stuff has been taking up a lot of my time.”</i>
	<p>Production Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I like people show’s that have good enough production quality. If the sound level is going up and down really bad where I have to keep adjusting my audio controls, even if it’s really funny or everyone is talking about it, for me I won’t go back to those shows”</i> • <i>“They are doing something original or presenting it in an original way. Not just talking about the same stuff that everyone else is talking about.”</i>

Interactions in the community	Commenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I watch people’s stuff, I comment on people’s stuff”</i> • <i>“I comment on everyone I watch”</i>
	Constructive Criticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Its great because you can get feedback from your audience that then dictates your videos”</i> • <i>“I get some constructive criticism and things like that. It makes your videos better and up the quality of your video”</i>
	Watching other peoples’ vlogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I like to watch stuff of people that I know”</i> • <i>“We can be very specific and subjective which allows us to choose what we want to watch and not watch”</i>

	<p>Other Online interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I have people contact me though either e-mail or maybe a social networking site. They say hey, I enjoyed this particular video or whatever and send a request on Facebook or Myspace or something like that”</i> • <i>“Yeah, a lot of the times it’s the e-mail for me. You know that’s just the best way to respond I think and I don’t do reply comments. I just e-mail them back all the time”</i>
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	<p>Real life interaction – in groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Yeah, I was at VloggerCon last year in San Francisco. It was strange, I never imaged that I would be doing something like that. I got to meet Richard and lots of the people that I watched everyday.”</i> • <i>“I’ve done to a few events here in the city, they have some get-togethers. Its really great and I go because it’s really wonderful to connect to other video bloggers and share with them what they are doing and then you meet somebody who has done something that you really like and it’s really exciting to see their faces.”</i>
	<p>Real life interaction – one on one</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“After getting more comfortable we might go to lunch or something”</i> • <i>“It’s nice to be able to continue that [communications] by meeting up in person</i>

	<p>Satisfaction for vloggers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The comments kind of spur me on and get me excited and keeps me going”</i> • <i>“When someone comments on my vlog it can be like “wow, somebody watched me and acknowledged my existence in the universe”</i>
	<p>Supportive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Or have a question about something and people will answer those questions or problems”</i> • <i>“Video blogging can be a very supportive community. A lot of people have trouble finding their voice. So many people say that I don’t have anything to say and who would want to listen to me. We all have something to say. We have fellow souls who help us troubleshoot the website, or answer technical questions, or tell us to keep at it. It’s really very very positive”</i>

	Decentralized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Other than reading vlog posts and watching each others videos, no one was directly telephoning anyone, directing anyone, there has been no one single mastermind behind the movement”</i>
	Community based upon interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I think commenting really brings a community to this whole thing. We’re all creating online for certain people, not this whole mass of individual people.”</i> • <i>“If you’re actually going for community where there’s a back and forth dialog and communications, you really have to [have comments]”</i>

4.2.1. Motivations for Vlogging. Vloggers had many reasons for vlogging, but most prominent were being able to post and watch vlogs about peoples’ personal lives. Vloggers are interested in stories about the personal lives of other vloggers. They enjoy when they are able to get to know the person that created the vlog. One vlogger sums it up with *“I’m really most interested in peoples’ stories about their personal lives”*. Another says that they *“like a lot of personal video blogs where you get to know people and they create out of their own lives”* and *“tend to go more towards a personal- like real life video blog.”*

This involved sharing personal stories, expressions, opinions, environments, and creativity with their family, friends, or other vloggers. Sometimes vloggers just put their videos online instead of having to mail them out to those far away from them. A few supporting statements are *“I want to do something creative/artistic”* and *“I do it*

sometimes to tell a story to communicate with people.” and “I put them [videos] online and have them available for my family to see and those who live close by.”

Part of the reasons for sharing with other vloggers beyond family and friends is to gain attention from others. Sometimes this want of attention starts at a very early age. Often time vloggers see their videos as a way to entertain others. One vlogger reported *“Ever since I was a little kid I liked attention. I get attention and I like being in the center. I like being kind of the center of the attention.”* Another says *“I love to be on camera and like for other people to watch” and even considers it entertainment to others when they say “It’s partly to entertain people”.*

Some vloggers found that vlogging is fun to do and even considered it a personal hobby. They vlogged for themselves more than anyone that was watching. One stated *“I’m just doing it for fun really and I do it more for myself than for anybody who’s watching really”*, and *“It’s just fun to do and is an interesting hobby for me.”* Overall though, vloggers generally watched the kinds of vlogs that they make. All of the vloggers in this sample were personal vloggers and every one of them reported that they enjoy watching personal vlogs the most.

Vloggers have found the internet to be a great way to make friends with people around the world. Vloggers found that they have made more friends online than offline. Most are based upon similar interests. One vlogger that states *“I have made friends all across the world, especially folks that have a genuine interest in Japan often keep coming back to my site, as do other videobloggers.”* Another vlogger says *“I would say that I have far more friends now online than offline. A lot of people that do not understand the internet are like you’re always at your computer, you’re cutting yourself off from the rest of the world and you’re just becoming isolated. I have found the opposite to be true.”*

4.2.2. Reasons to Choose Video as a Medium for Blogging. Vloggers chose video mainly for its advantages over other media, such as text and audio. First and foremost, video is a rich medium consisting of a combination of audio and moving images. Vloggers find that video creates a more personal experience than text or photos as they can see facial expressions and hear tones of voice. For example, one vlogger stated that *“When you meet them [other vloggers] it’s like you know them because you*

have seen their facial expression and you've heard their tone of voice.” Another vlogger explained that the visual aspect of it gives more personal information when he states “You get to see people’s spaces. You see their environment and even if you don’t get to see that person, you get to see something visual that they created. I think you get a lot more kind of rich personal information than you would get from a text blog and so you create a situation where you tend to know the person, you feel closer to them than you would with just written or even audio kinds of blogs. So when you meet them in person it feels like you know them, which is very odd. So, it tends to create this really kind of close community more so than most virtual communities.”

Vloggers also state that they have greater flexibility with video than with text or photo blogs and it is much easier than public access TV. With a video camera it is as easy as recording a show and uploading it online. For example a vlogger cited that he “loves being able to just turn on the camera and make something” with vlogs.

Vloggers are also able to express themselves more with video than with other forms of media such as writing. Another vlogger states “I’m able to do more with videos than I can with writing.”

Vlogging is a highly interactive medium, which allows for conversations and connections with other vloggers. Unlike television, vlogs allow for conversation between the vlog author and the viewers. Viewers can comment on vlogs and vloggers can comment on each others’ vlogs which leads to conversations. Vloggers even go as far as integrating other vloggers into their videos. One vlogger explains the medium as “So, there is a whole conversation and it’s [vlogging] more of an interactive medium than just television. You watch something you like and you comment on it and maybe if you can, make a video about it or mesh it up or do something like that. I love when people take other [vlogger’s] videos and then put them together to make something interesting.”

Part of the reasons for vlogging is to connect with other vloggers and stay updated on each other. One vlogger mentioned that they vlog partly to “keep in touch with them [other vloggers].” Vloggers quickly find that there are others vloggers like themselves online and desire to socialize with them. They vlog about things in their real lives and once they upload their videos online they find other vloggers that have similar interests as them. Vloggers find it comforting to know that other people just like them are uploading

their videos and watching other people's videos of their lives. A vlogger explains that he started off by *"kind of making videos and kind of showing my life and I found other people were doing it. So, I just started doing it on a regular basis and having a different audience."* Another vlogger stated that he wants *"to know what the shape of things are in the vlogosphere. And it gives me peace of mind knowing other people in the world are sitting in their living rooms making videos and posting them on the internet, kind of like a confirmation that I am not crazy, there are other people out there like me. So of course I comment, to let them know we have all somehow become connected."*

Vlogs are a new form of consumer created media beyond text blogs or public access television. Vloggers make videos and post them on the internet for anyone to watch which allows them to have a voice and engage in intelligent conversations. Statements such as *"I just like the fact that people have to do something intelligent and communicate and have a voice and not have to go through like studios or TV stations"* and *"It's so awesome to make media and that your media consumption is made by people you know"* give some indication as to why vlogs are becoming such a popular form of consumer created media.

4.2.3. Characteristics of Vloggers. Vloggers reported that they primarily vlogged during their free time. Jobs and family responsibilities often took precedence over vlogging. Some vloggers spend up to two to three hours a day watching vlogs and post up to every day, especially during special weeks such as videoblogging week (videobloggingweek2007.blogspot.com). A vlogger explains that she *"used to spend a huge amount of time watching video blogs. It was basically 2-3 hours a day. More recently I haven't had much time because I graduated from school and I work."* Another vlogger got married and hasn't had much time recently to post. *"I have over 250 videos on my site at the moment. There have been weeks where I posted 3 or 4 videos a week. However I recently got married and for a lack of a better expression, marriage stuff has been taking up a lot of my time."*

Another characteristic is that vloggers usually had experience with blogs and/or video production before they started vlogging. They were using video long before they started putting their videos online and some of them even knew how to edit their videos

and burn them to compact disc. Vloggers made statements such as *“I knew how to shoot a video”, “I was kind of playing around making movies probably for a couple of years before I put it online”, “I have been making like since I was a little kid but when I got a new computer, I started making videos on a regular basis pretty much for like you know for Christmas”* about prior video experience. Five vloggers reported that they had previous blogs.

Most vloggers interviewed also had standards for production quality, both in terms of the audio/video quality and original/creative content. Vloggers had expectations of audio quality in the vlogs that they watched and also expected for the content of the video to be creative/original. Supporting statements were: *“I like people shows that have good enough production quality. If the sound level is going up and down really bad where I have to keep adjusting my audio controls, even if it’s really funny or everyone is talking about it, for me I won’t go back to those shows”* *“They are doing something original or presenting it in an original way. Not just talking about the same stuff that everyone else is talking about.”*

4.2.4. Interaction in the Community. The exchange of feedback is a social norm in the vlogger community. Vloggers often leave feedback in the form of comments on vlogs that they watch. When received, vloggers reported that the feedback gave them satisfaction and encouragement to continue creating vlogs. Leaving positive feedback on a vlog was interpreted by vloggers as someone watched their vlog and enjoyed it enough to leave a comment that acknowledged that they enjoyed it. All vloggers had statements similar to *“the comments kind of spur me on and get me excited and keeps me going”, “when someone comments on my vlog it can be like “wow, somebody watched me and acknowledged my existence in the universe”, and “gives us some satisfaction knowing that hey some people are watching and they enjoyed it enough.”*

Comments left on vlogs almost always lead to other forms of online interactions such as instant messaging, e-mail, and other means. Some vloggers even used social networking sites such as the Facebook (facebook.com) or Myspace (myspace.com). Vloggers often did not comment on the comments left on their vlogs but instead used e-mail as evident in statements such as *“I’ve instant messaged them, we e-mail”* and *“I*

have people contact me though either e-mail or maybe a social networking site. They say hey, I enjoyed this particular video or whatever and send a request on Facebook or Myspace or something like that.”

Often times online friendships turn into real life interactions such as group events like VloggerCon (vloggercon.com) or local meet ups. Some of the larger group events were organized by a core group of people; while other events such as local meet ups were just vloggers making plans together. Many of the vloggers interviewed had attended VloggerCon, a conference created specifically for vloggers. One of the organizers of VloggerCon said that *“There’s not many real-life opportunities for people to interact, which is one of the reasons why I did VloggerCon”*. Most vloggers in this study have attended VloggerCon with statements similar to *“I’ve been to VloggerCon last year... it was cool to meet a bunch of people I could not have met otherwise. I met a lot of people that I am a fan of. It was a really needed experience”* and *“Yeah, I was at VloggerCon last year in San Francisco. It was strange, I never imagined that I would be doing something like that. I got to meet Richard and lots of the people that I watched everyday.”* Also a vlogger mentioned that they have met their online vlogger friends in person and had lunch with them with the statement *“After getting more comfortable we might go to lunch or something.”*

Overall vloggers were found to be supportive of each other and offered help or advice when they could. Questions and issues that vloggers had were often able to be resolved or appropriate support was given by members of the vlogger community. Vloggers even encourage each other to post more vlogs, especially the newer ones that are still finding their voice. One vlogger notes that when vloggers have questions about something, people will answer those questions or problems. Other forms of support would be encouraging those that have trouble finding anything to say. One vlogger had an insightful comment: *“A lot of people have trouble finding their voice. So many people say that I don’t have anything to say and who would want to listen to me. That’s a big myth that the entertainment industry has perpetrated on all of us is that they are the only ones who have something to say and we’re supposed to listen. We all have something to say.”* Sometimes this support came in the form of constructive criticism for their show. These comments served as useful ways to increase the production quality of

vlogs they were written for. They also served as a feedback mechanism to determine which topics or vlogs styles the audience enjoys so that they may be incorporated into future vlogs. Comments such as *“I get some constructive criticism and things like that. It makes your videos better and ups the quality of your video”* and *“If I don’t have comments, I’m thinking people didn’t like it. So, yeah, it’s a gauge that helps me know if people like that type of video and I should make something similar to that kind next time”* clearly indicate that a portion of the comments are directly related to the show.

Vloggers watched and created vlogs based upon their interests. This creates a community based upon the interactions of those with the same interests. Unlike television, bloggers can pick and choose what vlogs they would like to watch. Vloggers typically watch vlogs that they enjoy and those of their friends or people they know. A vlogger notes that *“we can be very specific and subjective which allows us to choose what we want to watch and not watch.”* and another said *“I watch people that I like.”* It was also found that those with similar interests will typically be the ones to comment on a vlogger’s vlog. Most vloggers said statements similar to *“I’ll get comments from many people who share similar interests.”*

One interesting note about the vlogger community is that since it consists of vloggers watching and creating vlogs based upon interests, it is a highly decentralized community. No one is in direct control of the community. Instead, the culmination of all of the individual vlogger interactions is what creates a loosely bounded and decentralized community. A vlogger notes that *“other than reading vlog posts and watching each others videos, no one was directly telephoning anyone, directing anyone, there has been no one single mastermind behind the movement.”*

4.3. DISCUSSION OF QUALITATIVE RESULTS

4.3.1. Similarities to Other Forms of Blogging. Vlogs and other forms of blogs share many things in common, based on a review of the research on vlogging. Most of this can be attributed to the fact that some vloggers started blogging long before video blogging came into existence. Many of the motivations for vlogging were also found to be motivations for text and photo blogging. There are both personal type blogs and vlogs

and people share in both instances. Studies such as Wang's, Boyd's, Nardi's, Rosbenbloom's, Herring's, and Kwai Fun's do not specifically study motivations of vloggers except for Nardi (Boyd, 2006; Herring & Scheidt, 2004; IP Kwai Fun, 2005; Nardi, Schiano, & Gumbrecht, 2004; Rosenbloom, 2004; Wang, Deng, & Chiu, 2005). Nevertheless, all alluded to blogger motivations to some extent.

Table 4.2 - Similar Motivations

Similar Motivation	Prior Literature
Blog about their personal Lives	Wang et al, 2005, Nardi et al, 2004
Autobiographical blogs	Boyd, 2006; Wang et al, 2005
Blog to share with others	Boyd, 2006; Kwai Fun, 2005
Bloggers share culture & environment with others	Wang et al, 2005
Blog for personal expression	Herring et al, 2004
Blog to express opinion	Nardi et al, 2004
Blog for their family and friends	Wang et al, 2005
Blog to seek attention from others	Rosenbloom, 2004

Wang (2005) found that blogs were used by bloggers to write about their personal lives. Boyd (2006) and Wang (2005) found that lots of the blogs were autobiographical and Boyd (2006) stated that they served as a means to share things with others such as their culture and personal environments. They were also used for personal expression (Herring & Scheidt, 2004) or for expressing an opinion (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2004). Frequently blogs were published for family and friends (Wang, Deng, & Chiu, 2005) and Rosenbloom (2004) suggests that they are also used to seek attention from others.

The reasons for choosing text or photos as a medium for blogging were similar to the reasons for choosing video. These reasons came from the same studies as the similar motivations.

Table 4.3 - Similar Reasons to Use Text or Photos as a Medium

Similar reasons for use as a medium	Prior Literature
Blogs are a highly interactive medium	Herring et al, 2004
Conversation in blogs	Herring et al, 2004
Blogs to connect with others	Wang et al, 2005
Bloggers had more friends online than offline	Wang et al, 2005

Herring et al (2004) found that blogs were also a highly interactive medium and were filled with conversations. Wang et al (2005) finds that blogs were used to connect with others and also found that like vloggers, bloggers had more friends online than offline.

Last, the interactions in vlogs were found to be similar in some ways to other forms of blogs. Again, these similarities were found in the same studies as the similar motivations and reasons to use blogs.

Table 4.4 - Similar Community Interactions

Similar Community Interactions	Prior Literature
Feedback is a social norm for bloggers	Wang et al, 2005
Feedback is satisfaction for bloggers	Wang et al, 2005
Bloggers are supportive of each other	Wang et al, 2005
Read and Write blogs based on interests	Boyd, 2006
Bloggers create community from interactions	Boyd, 2006
Bloggers engage in other forms of online interactions	Wang et al, 2005
Bloggers engage in real life group interactions	Kwai Fun, 2005
Bloggers engage in real life one on one interactions	Nardi et al, 2004; Wang et al, 2005

Interactions in the form of feedback occurred quite frequently and were a social norm of the blogger community (Wang, Deng, & Chiu, 2005). Blogger feedback was found to be like vlogger feedback in that it was a source of satisfaction and was often supportive. Another similarity is that writing blogs and reading other blogs is based upon personal interests (Boyd, 2006). This exchange of feedback is what creates the blogger community (Boyd, 2006). Bloggers also had other forms of online communication (Wang, Deng, & Chiu, 2005). Nardi (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2004) found that bloggers move their interactions offline in the form of groups or one-on-one meetings.

4.3.2. Differences between Blogs and Vlogs as Virtual Communities. The differences between vlogs and other forms of blogs generally had to do with the richness of the media added by video. Based on the comments of vlogger, it appears that this enhanced medium tends to make vlogs even more personal and emotionally intimate than text blogs. As one vlogger reported when watching vlogs, he is able to sense their emotions as they are conveyed through tone of voice or facial expressions in the video. Also the use of video creates new opportunities and vloggers found that they could do more with videos than writing alone.

Vlogs are a new form of consumer created media. Traditionally, sharing video with a large audience was only possible through television stations or movie theaters. While there are programs that television studios offer to everyday individuals such as public access, they are subject to many stipulations such as a full production schedule of half hour episodes which make them inaccessible to most people. Blogging was seen as a new wave of consumer journalism when it became popular. Vlogs are now enjoying that same status as another form of consumer created media. This is most apparent in one vlogger's enthusiastic statement of "It's so awesome to make media and that your media consumption is made by people you know."

5. LIMITATIONS

Due to the scope of the research, this study focuses on linkages between vloggers - in the form of hyperlinks to each other's vlogs - in studying the social network in the vloggers' community. As the results of the qualitative study suggest, vloggers communicate and connect in other ways beyond the hyperlinks formed on their vlogs. Despite this limitation, links often captured the comments left on vlogs, since vloggers generally include a link to their web site. This limitation also creates opportunities for future research. For example, a study of a more complete social network of vloggers that included other forms of online interactions such as e-mails, instant messages, and voice over IP as well as tracking offline interactions would likely provide additional support for the highly decentralized nature of the vlogging community.

Another limitation of this study in generalizing is that it was limited to personal vloggers. There are more forms of vlogs than personal that may be different than the sample of personal vloggers in this study. Again this creates opportunities for future studies that can expand upon this study and explore the differences and similarities between personal vlogs and other types of vlogs.

6. CONCLUSION

This research was designed to explore a vloggers' community, an emerging phenomenon that has received little attention in academic research. This research was conducted using both a quantitative and qualitative methods. The major findings of the quantitative social network analysis, was that the vlogging community was largely decentralized, with no individuals who had significant sway over the community, while at the same time, the community clearly consisted of a core group of active-connected vloggers and a peripheral group which was less active and connected. The core findings of the qualitative research were that: a) vloggers were strongly motivated by the opportunity to share life stories, experiences, and cultures with others; b) video as a medium allows for more intimate and emotional interaction than other on-line communication media; c) many vloggers had previous experience with video, text blogging, or both; and d) Active interaction is at the core of the vlogging community.

This research offers some implications for vloggers. Since vlogs provide a more personal, realistic experience, individuals may be able to use vlogs to gain a cross-cultural understanding and thus be more empathetic to other cultures. Vlogs also allow communication at a more personal level. Thus, vlogs can serve as a new way for people to interact. Individuals can also use vlogs to raise awareness about themselves or other issues. For example, people such as politicians can communicate to voters more directly than television advertisements and even respond to comments left on their vlogs.

Businesses could use vlogs also to communicate with consumers. They could use vlogs to better their customer service. Although many businesses already use text blogs, they can be much more personal and interactive using video to make vlogs to raise awareness of their products. Robert Scoble, for example, interviewed Microsoft employees while he worked there and posted the videos online as a vlog (Wikipedia, 2007c).

Another implication lies in the structure of the vlogger community. Since the vlogger community is a core/periphery structure, one can utilize this structure by identifying and reaching the core group of vloggers. This can generate network wide awareness much faster than reaching someone in the periphery.

This research was one of the first studies of vlogging. It provides a better understanding of vlogging and can serve as a foundation for future research. Further research can explore the similarities and differences between vlogs and other forms of virtual communities in more detail, to provide additional insight into vloggers. For example, it would be interesting to compare peoples' response to video vs. less immersive media in controlled laboratory studies, to examine difference in their emotional and empathetic effect. Perhaps further studies could use a larger sample of vloggers and include other types of vlogs besides personal. Other resources for lists of vloggers also exist, such as mefeedia.com and the yahoo group of vloggers (groups.yahoo.com/group/videoblogging). Finally, a longitudinal study could be performed when the vlogger community is more mature, to better understand how the vlogger network changes over time.

APPENDIX A. DETAILED CODING

I. Motivation for vlogging

A. Hobby

“Its just fun to do and interesting hobby for me”

“Vlogging is a very time consuming hobby”

“We started it because we wanted to play with the technology”

“I’m just doing it for fun really and I do it more for myself than for anybody who’s watching really”

“I’m doing this show purely for myself. The show has to serve me. Any moment that I feel like I have to do this to make other people happy is the day I stop the show. I go to the beach to de-stress. The moment it stresses me, it ruins the point of going”

B. Personal Lives

“I’m really most interested in people’s stories about their personal lives”

“Mostly I like to watch things where I can learn something about somebody’s life rather than something that’s experimental like people that are doing special effects or something.”

“I think it’s interesting what people choose to reveal about themselves and that is always interesting to me”

“I like a lot of personal video blogs where you get to know people and they create out of their own lives. I tend to go more towards a personal like real life video blog”

“My blog is very different from like you know the entertainment oriented blogs. It’s very personal”

“I post things from my everyday life. I post old videos that my kids made a long time ago.”

“I really like it when a person’s personality comes through”

C. Vlogs that take them new places

“I like to watch personal vlogs. I like vlogs that take me somewhere”

D. Watch what they make

“I’m a photographer. I’ll likely watch a photography video blog.”

“My first favorite is the personal because it’s kind of like what I do.”

From a comedian: “I like actually anything that is entertaining. I do watch a lot of other sketch comedy”

E. Making vlogs involves artistic and creative expression

“I want to do something creative/artistic”

“I feel like there’s this certain amount of art to video blogging. It’s sort of my artistic outlet. To me shooting the video and editing it is an artistic thing for me. That’s the fun part”

“To a degree I see myself as an artist. I have used a lot of music and abstract images of normal moments, such as the simple atmosphere of the streets of Fukuoka”

“Since I was doing a comedy it was kind of a natural thing for me to get myself out there and make funny clips and stuffs”

“For me it’s a creative outlet”

“To have a creative outlet”

F. Autobiographical

“My vlog is my life story about my career change and going to nursing school at 42. I do an autobiographical and informational vlog specifically about nursing”

G. Share something with others

i. A story

“I do it sometimes to tell a story to communicate with people”

ii. Environment/Culture

“I try my best to share Japanese/Asian culture, food, moments, language, and what it is like to be an American outside of America”

“I do the show because it feels go to me and I love sharing the beautiful spirit of Hawaii and offering people an alternative to their stressful day. It’s just my gift, my offering to others”

iii. Personal Expression

“I do it for personal expression sometimes”

iv. Express an opinion

“And sometimes I do it just to express an opinion”

v. Family/Kids

“Sometimes I do it for my family and my children”

“I put them [videos] online and have them available for my family to see and those who live close by”

“About my fourth year as an expat in Japan, I thought it was about time to show my folks what kind of place I live in.”

vi. Friends

“I had a friend in Germany and at the end of 2004 started making videos for him and showing him how my life was here in the states in Michigan”

“I started it because I had videos that I took on a trip to Australia and wanted to share them with a friend and I was looking for some place to put it where she could watch it. I discovered youtube, ourmedia, and blip.tv where you could take this huge file and have some place to put it where you didn't have to spend a lot of money or any money to store it”

H. Seek attention from others

“I love to be on camera and like for other people to watch”

“Ever since I was a little kid I liked attention. I get attention and I like being in the center. I like being kind of the center of the attention. The community is what keeps me video blogging”

“Partly to entertain people”

II. Reasons to choose video as a medium for blogging

A. Highly Interactive Medium

“Video blogging is like this great medium for communication between people.”

“Being able to give feedback on the feedback is sort of the neat natural communicative thing about vlogging in general”

“One of the things about this community is that it is interactive and different from the regular TV. So, I’m watching people’s stuff and they are watching mine”

B. Conversation

“I just commented on a post of a friend of mine that’s a video blogger and he sent me a big long e-mail and I’m probably going to write him back”

“It’s more like a conversation. I just feel like doing a video about a crazy argument going on and someone will respond to it.”

“There’s a kid who’s in Long Island...we would do comments on each others videos”

“I’m a mad commenter. I don’t think I watch anything without commenting on something.”

“So, there is a whole conversation and its [vlogging] more of an interactive medium than just television. You watch something you like and you comment on it and maybe if you can, make a video about it or mesh it up or do something like that. I love when people take other

[vlogger's] videos and then put them together to make something interesting.”

“Online, you're able to as you know have a real dialogue with people all over the world and that was something that was really interesting to me”

“All of us have something to contribute to the conversation and being able to allow that part of the conversation.

C. Connect with other vloggers

“I like to keep in touch with them [other vloggers]; I do it partly for that reason too.”

“Mostly it's just to connect with people”

“I want to know what the shape of things are in the vlogosphere. And it gives me peace of mind knowing other people in the world are sitting in their living rooms making videos and posting them on the internet, kind of like a confirmation that I am not crazy, there are other people out there like me. So of course I comment, to let them know we have all somehow become connected”

“I was kind of making videos and kind of showing my life and I found other people were doing it. So, I just started doing it on a regular basis and having a different audience”

“There are a lot of people I've gotten to know because they leave me comments and then I click on their profile page and find out what they are doing and then I kind of get to know them through that”

“Once I get to know somebody then I especially want to watch their videos”

“That’s one amazing experience and it’s just in the social connection between people”

D. Consumer created media

I just like the fact that people have to do something intelligent and communicate and have a voice and not have to go through like studios or TV stations”

“It’s so awesome to make media and that your media consumption is made by people you know”

E. More friends online than offline

“I have made friends all across the world, especially folks that have a genuine interest in Japan often keep coming back to my site, as do other videobloggers”

“I would say that I have far more friends now online than offline. A lot of people that do not understand the internet are like you’re always at your computer, your cutting yourself off from the rest of the world and your just becoming isolated. I have found the opposite to be true.”

F. Vlogs versus blogs/other communities

i. Greater Opportunities

“I’m able to do more with videos than I can with writing”

ii. Easier

“[Referring to public access] I was always frustrated that I couldn’t get anything on the air unless I did a half hour episode. Like I had

3 of them in a week and I had a whole calendar of production schedules.”

“I love being able to just turn on the camera and make something”

iii. More Personal

“When you meet them it’s like you know them because you have seen their facial expression and you’ve heard their tone of voice”

“You get to see people’s spaces. You see their environment and even if you don’t get to see that person, you get to see something visual that they created. I think you get a lot more kind of rich personal information than you would get from a text blog and so you create a situation where you tend to know the person, you feel closer to them than you would with just written or even audio kinds of blogs. So when you meet them in person it feels like you know them which is very odd. So, it tends to create this really kind of close community more so than most virtual communities.”

“People are creating very close bonds”

“Since there is this level of privacy that people have online that you don’t have when you know people in person, it’s much easier to be open in other respects. It allows people to open up their hearts and their minds when they communicate. Not always of course, but it’s the possibility, and that of course enables friendships to form much more quickly”

“I feel like I get to know people via their vlog. However I am only getting a small glimpse into their life, as I know from experience, I

edit myself whenever I post something that is private, and I imagine other people do to”

People feel close to each other because they are sort of in each other’s lives”

III. Characteristics of vloggers

A. Previous video

“I came from old media stuff. I was a producer of a bunch of little films and documentary films and I just happened to know the technology was there and I’ve latched on to it”

“I used to do video for our public access station”

“I have been making like since I was a little kid but when I got a new computer, I started making videos on a regular basis pretty much for like you know for Christmas.”

“I knew how to shoot a video”

“I was kind of playing around making movies probably for a couple of years before I put it online”

“I guess you could say I caught the video bug about three years ago. I went to the electronic store and about a nice Panasonic 3CCD camera. Got my hands on Final Cut Pro and started making short video things. I was proud of them and would burn them to CD and send via snail mail to my folks and friends”

B. Previous blog

I have been blogging for awhile and then yeah, I just started posting videos in 2005”

“I have been blogging and originally started text blogging because I went to Alaska and wanted to keep my family and friends up to date about what I was doing”

I had a text blog

“I already had a blog”

“I started out as a blogger and I take pictures and I still write sometimes”

C. Done during free time

“[posts have] been more sparse recently, I’m working like 3 or 4 jobs”

“Not a lot of time [to watch vlogs], I’m working like 3 or 4 jobs”

“I used to spend a huge amount of time watching video blogs. It was basically 2-3 hours a day. More recently I haven’t had much time because I graduated from school and I work.”

“I used to do it 3-4 times a week [when I had more free time], but these days it’s actually like once a month”

“Lately I have not had time to watch so much because I’ve been busy with other things”

“I have over 250 videos on my site at the moment. There have been weeks where I posted 3 or 4 videos a week. However I recently got

married and for a lack of a better expression, marriage stuff has been taking up a lot of my time.”

“I am sure that I will get back into the swing of things soon.”

D. Production Quality

“I like people show’s that have good enough production quality. If the sound level is going up and down really bad where I have to keep adjusting my audio controls, even if it’s really funny or everyone is talking about it, for me I won’t go back to those shows”

“They are doing something original or presenting it in an original way. Not just talking about the same stuff that everyone else is talking about. ”

IV. Interaction in the community

A. Giving/receiving feedback is a social norm

i. Giving

“I try to comments on most of the videos I watch”

“I watch people’s stuff, I comment on people’s stuff”

“I comment on everyone I watch”

ii. Receiving

a. Satisfaction for vloggers

“It’s not important. It’s nice though! I appreciate it. Everyone likes to be loved”

“The comments kind of spur me on and get me excited and keeps me going”

“It’s the comments that keeps the people video blogging”

“I won’t deny that I love getting feedback from people”

“When someone comments on my vlog it can be like
“wow, somebody watched me and acknowledged my
existence in the universe”

“There’s an immediate kind of gratification when I receive
comments”

“Gives us some satisfaction knowing that hey some people
are watching and they enjoyed it enough”

“You’re going to need feedback to keep going and keep
pushing yourself”

“I really like getting comments. I value them and I
certainly don’t expect people’s comment every time. It’s
part of the motivation. It’s really a social thing, a sort of
layer of interaction”

“You get that encouragement from people saying hey, I
really like that and it encourages you to keep up making
more videos”

“It’s fun to get comments. If you get comments you’ll like
it. I love when somebody watched it”

“I don’t need a lot of fans to tell me I’m great in order to
build me up. However, if no one commented or sent me e-

mails, I probably would have stopped doing it. I can go to the beach by myself and get the stress relieving effects for myself and it's a whole lot less work"

b. Supportive

"I think that other video bloggers support each other and that encourages other people to comment that normally may not"

"Or have a question about something and people will answer those questions or problems"

"Video blogging can be a very supportive community. A lot of people have trouble finding their voice. So many people say that I don't have anything to say and who would want to listen to me. That's a big myth that the entertainment industry has perpetrated on all of us is that their the only ones who have something to say and we're supposed to listen. We all have something to say. We have fellow souls who help us troubleshoot the website, or answer technical questions, or tell us to keep at it. It's really very very positive"

"People are helping each other out"

c. Constructive Criticism

"Its great because you can get feedback from your audience that then dictates your videos"

"You take it and try to use it"

“I get some constructive criticism and things like that. It makes your videos better and up the quality of your video”

“If I don’t have comments, I’m thinking people didn’t like it. So, yeah, it’s a gauge that helps me know if people like that type of video and I should make something similar to that kind next time”

B. Based upon Interests

I usually watch a lot of my friends. If I know them I watch them.”

“I watch people that I like”

“I like to watch stuff of people that I know”

“We can be very specific and subjective which allows us to choose what we want to watch and not watch”

“I’ll get comments from many people who share similar interests”

C. Decentralized

“Other than reading vlog posts and watching each others videos, no one was directly telephoning anyone, directing anyone, there has been no one single mastermind behind the movement”

D. Community based upon interactions

“I think commenting really brings a community to this whole thing. We’re all creating online for certain people, not this whole mass of individual people.”

“I think it’s crucial. For the community it would have to be necessary.”

“If you’re actually going for community where there’s a back and forth dialog and communications, you really have to [have comments]”

“I think it’s really important and helps develop the whole community

“The feedback is what builds the community in the first place”

“My payment is like when there’s people like hey, you know I’ve been really thinking about going to music school and you know I saw your blog and then I went to drop an application today”

“I think comments are what has made the community.

“Well if I post something about my life and you sent me an e-mail and it somehow stuck a chord and we may send a couple of e-mails. It tells me what you’re interested in and that tells you something about me and therefore it makes a community”

“Giving feedback and creating videos for other people is really important for a community”

E. Other Online interaction

“Comment on the comment? Yeah, sure. Of course [using e-mail]”

“It’s nice to be able to continue that [communications] through e-mail, phone, or meeting up in person. I think it’s great”

“I’ve instant messaged them, we e-mail”

“I have people contact me though either e-mail or maybe a social networking site. They say hey, I enjoyed this particular video or whatever and send a request on Facebook or Myspace or something like that”

“Yeah, a lot of the times it’s the e-mail for me. You know that’s just the best way to respond I think and I don’t do reply comments. I just e-mail them back all the time”

F. Real Life interaction

i. Groups

“Yeah, I’ve met a lot of people [at VloggerCon]”

“There’s not many in real life constructs for people to interact which is one of the reasons why I did VloggerCon”

“Sometimes it feels better to meet the person one on one and share views much like I’ve done with Richard more than once”

“I’ve been to VloggerCon last year... it was cool to meet a bunch of people I could not have met otherwise. I met a lot of people that I am a fan of. It was a really needed experience”

“Yeah, I was at VloggerCon last year in San Francisco. It was strange, I never imaged that I would be doing something like that. I got to meet Richard and lots of the people that I watched everyday.”

“I’ve met them at conferences”

“I’ve spoken at VloggerCon 2006”

“I’ve done to a few events here in the city, they have some get-togethers. Its really great and I go because it’s really wonderful to connect to other video bloggers and share with them what they are doing and then you meet somebody who has done something that you really like and it’s really exciting to see their faces.”

“I’ve made appearances at apple stores”

ii. 1 on 1

“After getting more comfortable we might go to lunch or something”

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