Sex, Lies, and Data

Shea Swauger

University of Colorado - Denver

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sex,
lies,
and data
Experimental evidence of massive-scale emotional contagion through social networks

Adam D. I. Kramer1,*, Jamie E. Guillory2, and Jeffrey T. Hancock2

1Cite Data Science Team, Facebook, Inc., Menlo Park, CA 94025, and Departments of Communication and Information Science, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853

2Department of Communication and Information Science, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853

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Emotions can be transferred to others via emotional contagion, leading people to experience the same emotions without their awareness. Emotional contagion is well established in laboratory experiments, with people transferring positive and negative emotions to others. Data from a large, real-world social network collected over a 20+ year period suggests that longer-lasting moods (e.g., depression, happiness) can be transferred through networks and influence people’s emotional expressions, even days later (77) (although some shared emotions may exist in fact several days). To date, however, there is no evidence of emotional contagion occurring outside of the interpersonal interactions between individuals by reducing or elevating others’ emotional expressions. When positive expressions were reduced, people produced fewer positive posts and emotional expressions were repressed. The opposite pattern occurred. These results indicate that emotions expressed on Facebook influence our own emotions, constructing experimental evidence for massive-scale emotional contagion via social networks. This work also suggests that, in contrast to prevailing assumptions, interpersonal interaction and nonverbal cues are not strictly necessary for emotional contagion, and that the expression of others’ positive emotions conditions a positive experience for people.

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Psychological and Cognitive Sciences

PNAS is publishing an Editorial Expression of Concern regarding the following article: "Experimental evidence of massive-scale emotional contagion through social networks." By Adam D. I. Kramer, Jamie E. Guillory, and Jeffrey T. Hancock, which appeared in issue 24, June 17, 2014, of Proc Natl Acad Sci USA (111:8788-8790; first published June 2, 2014; 10.1073/pnas.1326866111). This paper represents an important and emerging area of social science research that needs to be approached with sensitivity and with caution regarding personal privacy issues. Questions have been raised about the principles of informed consent and opportunity to opt out in connection with the research described in this paper. The authors noted in their paper, "The study was consistent with Facebook’s Data Use Policy, to which all users agree prior to creating an account on Facebook, containing information about this research." When the authors prepared their paper for publication in PNAS, they stated that: "Because the experiment was conducted by Facebook, Inc. for internal purposes, the Cornell University IRB [Institutional Review Board] determined that the project did not fall under Cornell’s Human Research Protections Program." This statement has been corrected. Obtaining informed consent and allowing participants to opt out are best practices in most instances under the US Department of Health and Human Services Policy for the Protection of Human Research Subjects (the “Common Rule”). Adherence to the Common Rule is PNAS policy, but as a private corporate Facebook was under no obligation to conform to the provisions of the Common Rule when conducting the research described in the paper that was submitted by the authors, and the Common Rule does not preclude its use. Based on the information provided by the authors, PNAS editors deemed it appropriate to publish the paper. It is nonetheless a matter of concern that the collection of this data by Facebook may involve the transfer of data to an entity with a different set of obligations with respect to the principles of obtaining informed consent and allowing participants to opt out.

Ida M. Vienna
Editor-in-Chief

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OkCupid's data
The OKCupid dataset: A very large public dataset of dating site users

Emil O. W. Kirkegaard
Julius D. Bjerrekar

Abstract

A very large dataset (N=4,437,126 variables) from the dating site OKCupid is presented and made publicly available for use by others. As an example of the analyses one can do with the dataset, a cognitive ability test is constructed from 14 suitable items. To validate the dataset and the test, the relationship of cognitive ability to religious beliefs and political interest/participation is examined. Cognitive ability is found to be negatively related to all measures of religious belief (latent correlations -0.20 to -0.30), and found to be positively related to all measures of political interest and participation (latent correlations 0.10 to 0.32). To further validate the dataset, we examined the relationship between Zodiac sign and every other variable. We found very scant evidence of any influence (the distribution of p-values from chi square tests was flat).

Limitations of the data are discussed.

Keywords: open data, big data, OKCupid, dating site, cognitive ability, IQ, intelligence, scale construction, religiosity, politics, astrology, Zodiac sign

1 Introduction

Despite many years of advocacy of preprints, it is still uncommon for social scientists to publicly share their datasets and even sharing data in request is rare (Krauskopf & Benjam, 2012; Savage & Vickers, 2009; Tontsch et al., 2011; Wicherts et al., 2011). There, the dataset in which indicates that those who refuse to share data upon request make more statistical errors than those who share data (Wicherts et al., 2011). This is doubly problematic because the mistakes cannot be corrected by other researchers. Furthermore, a given dataset may have many uses not all of which are known to those who collected it. Even if they are known, the collectors may not be interested in them (or even interested in hiding the results (Duarte et al., 2013), or they may simply not have enough time. Whatever it is, if the analyses are not done by the collectors and the data are unprovided to anyone else, the data is not used to its full extent. Big science is usually funded by the public, this wastes an incredible amount of public funds.

The lack of data sharing probably slows down the progress of science immensely because other researchers would use the data if they could. Supporting this, it can be observed that known public datasets enjoy widespread use. For instance, Project TALENT is a very large (N=660,000) dataset of American high school students collected in 1960. The dataset is still used by researchers examining questionnaires never considered of when it was collected. According to Google Scholar (https://scholar.google.com), there were 235, 148 and 116 papers published in 2013, 2014 and 2015 that had “project talent” in their title, indicating that it can still be useful despite being about 56 years old. For instance, (Duarte, 2014) used the data to examine the cognitive ability of children by the language spoken by their parents, while Magee et al. (2014) examined the linearity of relationships between cognitive ability and personality traits, and Danne et al. (2015) examined whether birth order showed relationships to cognitive ability and personality.

The NLSY79, CNLSY, and NSLY97 are nationally representative (using probability sampling) longitudinal

1 The opening decline in use over time is perhaps an effect of the very Google Scholar ‘find articles’ widget. Many new articles have probably not been fully indexed yet, hence lowering the numbers.

2 NSLY stands for National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, the
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Do Personal Ethics Influence Corporate Ethics?

John M. Griffin  Samuel Kruger  Gonzalo Maturana

First draft: November 18, 2015
This draft: August 18, 2016

ABSTRACT

We introduce a new measure of personal ethics in the form of marital cheating to examine the relationship between personal ethics and corporate misconduct. Firms with CEOs and CFOs who use a marital infidelity website are more than twice as likely to engage in two forms of corporate misconduct. The relationship is not explained by a wide range of regional, firm, and executive characteristics or by the infidelity website usage of other executives. Additionally, white-collar SEC defendants also have elevated levels of infidelity website usage. Our findings suggest that personal and professional ethics are not as distinct as some believe.

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Griffin and Kruger are at the McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas at Austin. Maturana is at the Galbana Business School at Emory University. Griffin: John.Griffin@utexas.edu. Kruger: Sam.Kruger@mccombs.utexas.edu. Maturana: Gonzalo.Maturana@emory.edu"

Original Article

Infidelity and the Internet: The Geography of Ashley Madison Usership in the United States

Michael L. Chohaney, Kimberly A. Panozzo

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Original View Article Online Version of Record published before inclusion in an issue

Abstract

Ashley Madison (com) has earned several million dollars facilitating extramarital affairs online; however, the market determinants of online infidelity matchmaking have not been researched. The now-infamous customer data breach in 2015 provided a unique opportunity to analyze a large population of individuals (N=702,309) who paid to engage in extramarital affairs using Ashley Madison. Aggregating this sensitive data into spatial units, we measured the relationship between several theorized market determinants and Ashley Madison subscription and spending rates in major United States markets. We found income is the leading market determinant for Internet-facilitated infidelity; indicating the service behaves as a luxury good; further, several characteristics related to infidelity at the individual level were also significant, including the negative relationship between religiosity and infidelity. Strong regression model performance suggests these results are robust insights into the market for online infidelity matchmaking.

Introduction

In July 2015, an anonymous hacker group self-described as "The Impact Team" accessed the user account database of the online dating website AshleyMadison.com and stole internal documents and private customer records. The hacker group demanded the website to cease operation on ethical grounds and threatened to publicly release the entire database of over 30 million user account records if it failed to do so. Ashley Madison did not meet the demand and the data was publicly released via file-sharing networks in August 2015.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
TUSKEGEE SYPHILIS EXPERIMENTS
Syphilis Victims in U.S. Study Went Untreated for 40 Years

By JEAN HELLER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON, July 25—For 40 years the United States Public Health Service has conducted a study in which human beings with syphilis, who were induced to serve as guinea pigs, have gone without medical treatment for the disease and a few have died of its late effects, even though an effective therapy was eventually discovered.

The study was conducted to determine from autopsies what the disease does to the human body.

Officials of the health service who initiated the experiment have long since retired. Current officials, who say they have serious doubts about the morality of the study, also say that it is too late to treat the syphilis in any surviving participants.

Doctors in the service say they are now rendering whatever other medical services they can give to the survivors while the study of the disease's effects continues.

Dr. Merlin K. DuVal, Assistant Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare for Health and Scientific Affairs, expressed shock on learning of the study. He said that he was making an immediate investigation.

The experiment, called the Tuskegee Study, began in 1932 with about 600 black men.
The Belmont Report
Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research

The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research

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values are built into all research. (this includes yours)
so build something into all research that interrogates those values.
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further reading

• S Mannheimer, SWH Young, D Rossmann On the Ethics of Social Network Research in Libraries. Journal of Information, Communication, and Ethics in Society 14 (2)

• S Mannheimer, EA Hull Sharing selves: Developing an ethical framework for curating social media data. International Digital Curation Conference 2017

• Data and Society: https://datasociety.net/

• Council for Big Data, Ethics, and Society: http://bdes.datasociety.net/

• Literally anything by these people (seriously):
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