Reviving Dormant Ties in an Online Social Network Experiment

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ABSTRACT

Social network users connect and interact with one another to fulfill different kinds of social and information needs. When interaction ceases between two users, we say that their tie becomes dormant. While there are different underlying reasons of dormant ties, it is important to find means to revive such ties so as to maintain vibrancy in the relationships. In this work, we thus focus on designing an online experiment to evaluate the effectiveness of personalized social messages to revive dormant ties. The experiment carefully selects users with dormant ties so that no user gets mixed treatments and be affected by the responses of other users undergoing treatment. Our results show that personalized message content plays an important part in reviving dormant ties. Specifically, we find that the message containing friend’s recent activity information is more effective than that containing inter-friend activity information. We observe that the quality of engagement of at least 50% of the revived ties can effectively be restored to the level before the ties become dormant. We also observe that it is easier to revive dormant ties that involve users from the same country than those involving users from different countries.