Building Community around a Blog

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Introduction

• A blog, the blogging phenomenon
• Community (commonality and connected)
• The Blogosphere
• Do you blog?

Who Blogs?

• Businesses (e.g., Toyota, Google)
• Political (e.g., pundits, politicians)
• Medical (e.g., doctors, patients)
• Researchers (e.g., Dr. K, Phil Windley)
• Family and friends (e.g., moms)
Blogosphere Properties

- Open community that anyone can join
  (e.g., Blogger, Wordpress, SixApart, your own setup)

- One can blog about anything
  (e.g., fine cuisine, bluegrass music, CS research)

- Both explicit and implicit connections
  (e.g., anchor links, interests)

- Measurable
  (e.g., posts are time-stamped, clickstream available)
Observational Study

- Create a blog
- Record everything we do to it
- Track everything others do with it
- Report our observations

Note: causation cannot be implied
Goals

1. **Substantiate claims** of how to build community around a blog (and refine them)

2. **Increase our social capital** among data miners by building community around our research
Claims

- Comment on other blogs
- Link to other blogs from your blog
- Use a blog pinging services
- Participate in blog carnivals
Social Capital
Observations
Blog History

2008-01-23
* Created a blog on Blogger at: http://datamininglab.blogspot.com
2008-01-28
* Hooked up Google Analytics so that we could track everything
* Posted about the blog analysis we are doing.
* Sent out an email to all the lab members asking them to comment and check out the blog.

2008-02-04
* Nate Purser sent an email to all lab members asking them to post content on the blog

2008-02-13
* Nate Purser posted an entry about the “Data Mining Search Engine” with links to:
  http://dataminingresearch.blogspot.com [A]
* Nate Purser posted a comment at:
  http://datamining.typepad.com/data_m...-superb.html#comments [B]

2008-02-16
* Steve Ivie posted a comment at:
  http://mycodeblog.blogspot.com/2007/12/record-linkage-resources.html [C]
Blog Traffic 1

Email sent to lab members

Start getting some traffic

Traffic Sources Overview

All traffic sources sent a total of 48 visits

50.00% Direct Traffic
50.00% Referring Sites
0.00% Search Engines
2008-02-20
* Sent a reminder email about posting a comment on another blog and linking back to ours.
* Christophe posted a comment at:
  http://dataminingresearch.blogspot.com/2008/02/small-book-review-supercrunchers.html [A]
* Christophe posted a comment at:
  http://abbottanalytics.blogspot.com/ (unfortunately, the link back to our blog was not recorded)
* Nate Purser posted a comment at:
  http://datamining.typepad.com/data_mining/2008/02/bloggingsuperb.html#comments [D]
* Matt Smith posted a comment at: http://www.bioteams.com/2007/02/18/social_networking_and.html [E]
* Matt Smith posted a comment at: http://nowisgone.com/2008/02/19/social-media-content-creation-process/[F]

2008-02-22
* The blog that Nathan posted about and Christophe commented on wrote an article about our blog:
  http://dataminingresearch.blogspot.com/2008/02/data-mining-lab.html [A]

2008-02-27
* Nate Purser posted a comment at:
  http://dataminingresearch.blogspot.com/2008/02/data-mining-lab.html [A]

- A blog, who we had written about and commented on decided to post an article about our new blog!
- Their post sparked new traffic
2008-03-05
* Sent email to KDnuggets’ Gregory Piatetsky-Shapiro requesting that we be put up on his blog list.

2008-03-11
* Gregory Piatetsky-Shapiro added a link to our blog on the KDnuggets website, which sends a monthly newsletter to data miners all over the world. The March newsletter was sent today (3/11/08).
* Gregory Piatetsky-Shapiro also linked to us in his blog highlights section
Blog Traffic II & III

Traffic is maintained and increases

Traffic Sources Overview

All traffic sources sent a total of 261 visits

- 21.84% Direct Traffic
- 77.78% Referring Sites
- 0.38% Search Engines

Referral Traffic begins to dominate

Added to KD Nuggets
Conclusion
Goal 1: Evaluation

1. **Substantiate claims** of how to build community around a blog

   - Emails *can* be used to build
   - Comments on other blogs *appear* to have begun to build community
   - Leveraging an existing relationship drove focused visitors to our blog
Goal 2: Evaluation

2. **Increase our social capital** among data miners by building community around our research

In under 7 weeks, the DML blog received **183** absolute unique visitors

(coming from 147 different cities in 32 different countries)
Future Work

- Identify and confirm new techniques for building community around a blog
- Build automated tools that
- Discover blogosphere structure (explicit and implicit)
- Identify blogs to connect with (that maximize social capital)
Questions?

Contact Us

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