“Shorts Last Sunday, Snow Pants Today”: Delving Into the Information Values of Immigrant and Expatriate Users of Twitter

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How does the information and communication technology (ICT) used by Canadian immigrant and expatriate members of Twitter interact with the information values of community members?

Purpose

- Information-centric online communities are frequent sources for seeking, sharing info
- Greater info sharing encouraged when users share similar information value judgments
- Information sharing, ICTs particularly important for immigrants, expatriates
- Information and social support important for immigrants, expatriates
- Further research is needed into immigrants’ ICT use, information value judgments

Methods

1. OBSERVATION
   - Ethnographic
   - Unobtrusive
   - Info Value Negotiation
   - Boundary Crossing
   - Select hashtags and keywords
   - Guide codebook

   #cdnimm
   #newtocanada
   #welcometocanada
   #expats
   #newcdns

   Significant, relevant keywords

2. CONTENT ANALYSIS
   - Information Worlds
     - Info Values
     - Information Sharing
     - Boundaries

   536 relevant tweets
   Both authors coded

3. FINDINGS
   - **CULTURAL**
     - Events for #NewCdns: The Immigrant Café: How to research for your small business.
   - **CONTEXTUAL**
     - Shorts last Sunday, snow pants today. #WelcomeToCanada.
     - Extremely close relationship between hashtag and user
     - Importance of following, “belonging”
     - Events, weather
   - **ECONOMIC**
     - These are #Vancouver’s best (and worst) places to live: #YVR Magazine
     - Media, government outlets
     - Accounts mentioned, cited
     - “Official” sources
   - **SOURCE**
     - …[among the] Top US expat destinations [was] #Vancouver #Canada
   - **TRUTH**
     - “Facts” but no clear evidence
     - Often overlapped context

Conclusions

- **IMPLICIT vs. EXPLICIT**
  - Explicit valued, recognized as immediately important
  - Implicit still valuable, but couched covertly
  - Implicit made more use of platform / ICT features

- Information of use in daily lives provided most cultural, contextual, economic value
- Clear interactions with ICT-based features: retweeting, liking, quoting, replying, following
- Strong role for boundaries and for cultural values (cf. Seraj, 2012)
- Some establishment of common ground seen (Arichchivili, 2008)
- Unclear if new knowledge created or new communities emerging (cf. Haythornthwaite, 2006; Worrall, 2015)
- Semi-structured qualitative interviews to further explore, detail cases
- Examine other expat communities and platforms (blogging, forums)