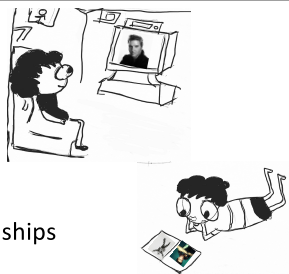


Kiran Garimella*, Jonathan Cohen**, Ingmar Weber#
*Aalto University/HIIT, **University of Haifa, #Qatar Computing Research Institute
kiran.garimella@aalto.fi, jcohen@com.haifa.ac.il, iweber@hbku.edu.qa

Para-social relationships (PSR)

- Imaginary one-sided relationships
- Common with celebrities, organizations (such as sports teams) or television stars.
- Similar in characteristics to normal relationships

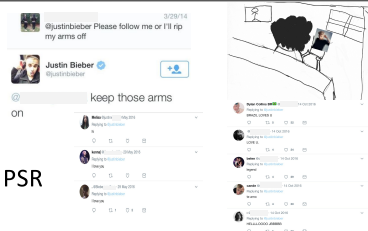


Motivation

- Understanding identity formation
- Understanding fandom
- Understanding mental health (e.g. loneliness, personal wellbeing)
- Marketing and advertising

Enter social media

- Social media makes PSR bi-directional
- 24-hour access to celebrities
- Increased the intimacy and strength of PSR



Parasocial Breakups

- End of a PSR
- Similar in characteristics to a normal break
- Social media makes it easier
- In this paper: PSB -> unfollowing



Dataset

- 15 most followed celebs on Twitter
- E.g. justinbieber, katyperry, arianagrande, etc
- 57,000 users (fans) sampled from 3 sets
- Get demographics from Face++
- Track them over 26 weeks (May -- Nov 2015)
- Look for unfollows



involved



Casual



Random

Methodology

- Survival Analysis
- Event: act of unfollowing a celeb
- Survival time: Months since following to unfollow (estimated)
- Censoring event: Users who haven't unfollowed yet
- Survival function: Probability of unfollowing after x months

Results

- Involved users are more likely to unfollow!
- Young and female users are more likely to be involved in a PSB.

Acknowledgements

This work has been supported by the Academy of Finland project "Nestor" (286211) and the EC H2020 RIA project "SoBigData" (654024).

Dataset available on request

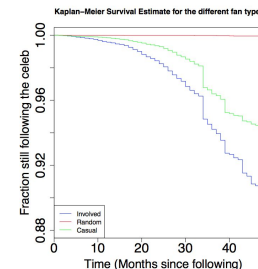


Figure 1: Survival probability for the three fan types