Families on Facebook

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Family

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Communication

- Parent - child interactions
- Online
- Across age, distance, etc…

Paper context

- Published by Facebook in 2013
  - A bit after Facebook bought Instagram (2012)
  - Machine learning early phase
- US centric
- Facebook public and usage was different than today
  - 15-25 were still present
  - People shared they daily impression, made jokes on other people wall
- Start of the takeover by older folks
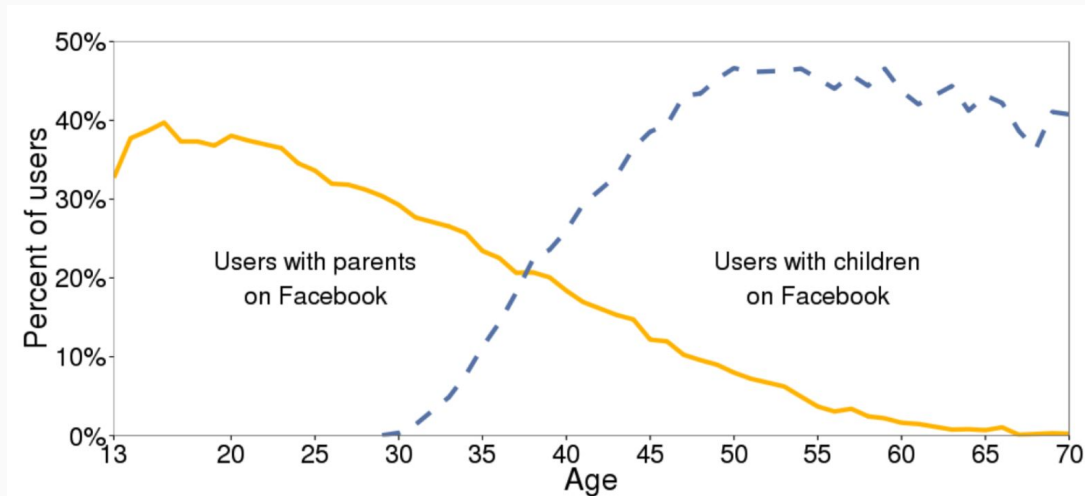
We have **data**, what can we learn?

- Relationships (family & friends)
- "Targeted" communication
  - Posts mentioning other people
  - Only looking a public posts (no direct messages)
- en_US
- 400K anonymized communication exchanges → *n-grams*
- Controlled for age, sex
- Logistic regression (elastic-net)

We have data, what can we **learn**?

- How common are parent-child relationships on Facebook? How does it vary with age and gender?
- Connections: Who "friends" whom, and when does it happen? What is the composition of their mutual friends?
- Communication: How often do parents and children communicate on the site, and how does it vary with the child's age, geographic distance, and gender?
- **How do the subject matter and linguistic properties of conversation between parents and children vary by age and gender?**

Friending

- 37% of users have marked a parent-child relationship (theory: 50%)
- Avg: 371 days, 19% within the first month
- 20 to 30 shared friends
  - 20% marked as relative, likely higher
  - Bi-modal or tri-modal age distribution

Communication volume

- parent-to-child: 1-4% of total messages
- child-to-parent: 1% of total messages
- Increase when
  - Moving to college
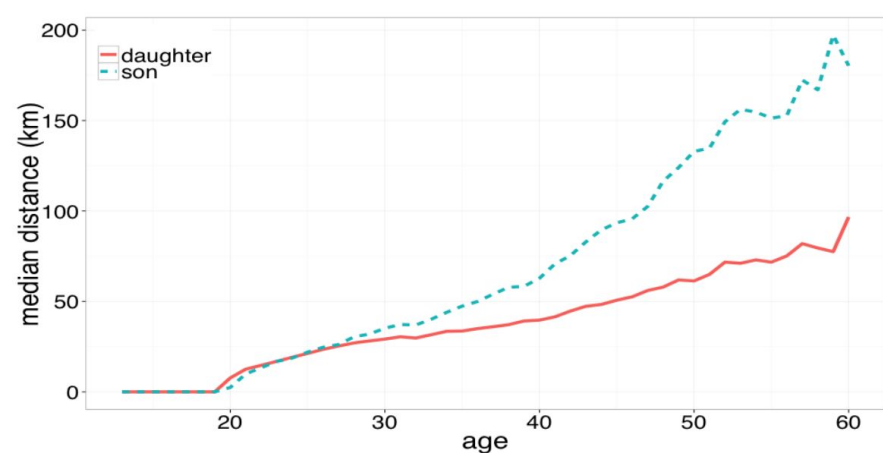 - Child-bearing
- Distance has little impact

Figure 5. Geographical distance from parent as a function of child age and gender.

Communication content

To summarize, parent-child communication on Facebook generally looks like you would expect: it's full of affection, advice, phone calls, and grandchildren.

Phrases like love dad are highly informative and can help distinguish between, say, a father and an uncle.

Communication content

- Categorization with the help of a dictionary for topic analysis
- Gender/role differences
  - Father more into hobbies for example
- Parents speak differently with teenager vs adult child
- Parents try to fit in
- Childs swear less to parents than friends

Caveats & Conclusion

- Semi-public communication, behave yourself
- Unreported relationships

Conclusion:

- Internet creates a trove of data!
- Family communicate in a similar fashion online and in-person
- Gender and age influence how we behave