Uncovering Motives for Social Networking Site Use Among Practitioners at Non-Profit Organizations

Andrew J. Roback

ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

For more on who I am and what I do, scan the above QR code to go to my website and view my CV.

aroback@hawk.iit.edu

andrewroback.com

@andrew0writer

Problem

Non-profit organizations (NPOs) are increasingly embracing social networking sites (SNS) as a means of connecting with people they serve, partner NPOs, donors, and other interested stakeholders.

Most of what we know about NPO use of SNS comes from Public Relations research, and most studies in that area conclude that NPOs are not taking full advantage of opportunities afforded by SNS technologies. This finding leads to an important question:

How do we know whether someone is using a system to its fullest potential if we don't know what they are trying to accomplish?

Uncovering motives is difficult because they are shifting, overlapping, complex, and/or difficult for users to articulate.

This study attempts to uncover motivation for NPO practitioner use of SNS through a multiple-method approach.

Approach

Approaches to Studying User Behavior in SNS

User-centered: Uses qualitative methods to investigate users' own perception of their use of SNS.
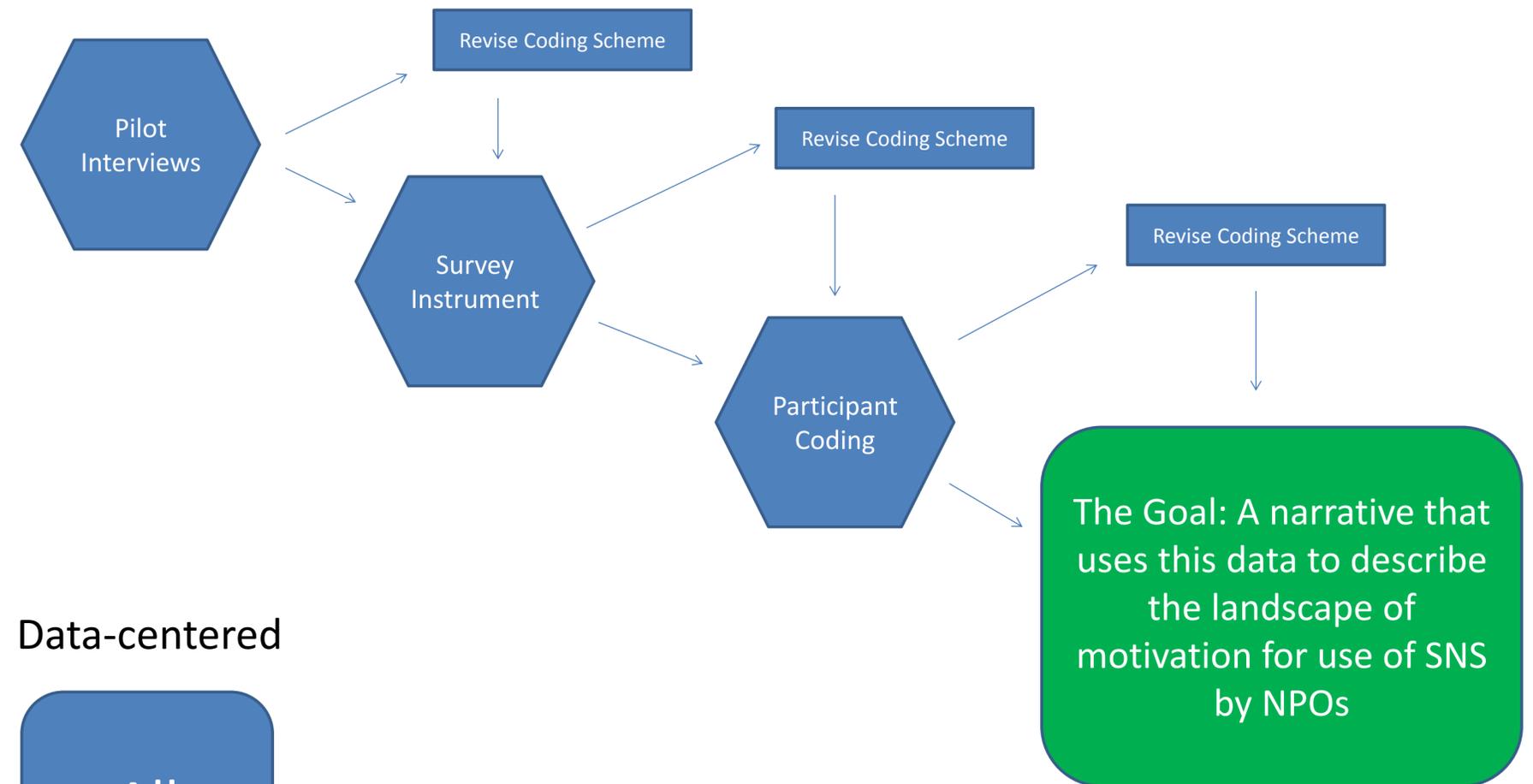
Data-centered: Uses quantitative analyses to analyze server-logs (or more common recently, user-contributed content) in order to measure actual user patterns and behavior.

Theory-centered: Aggregates prior case studies or interprets user behavior through a theoretical lens (often social science theory). These studies are useful for forming a predictive construct or model, but often lack empirical data.
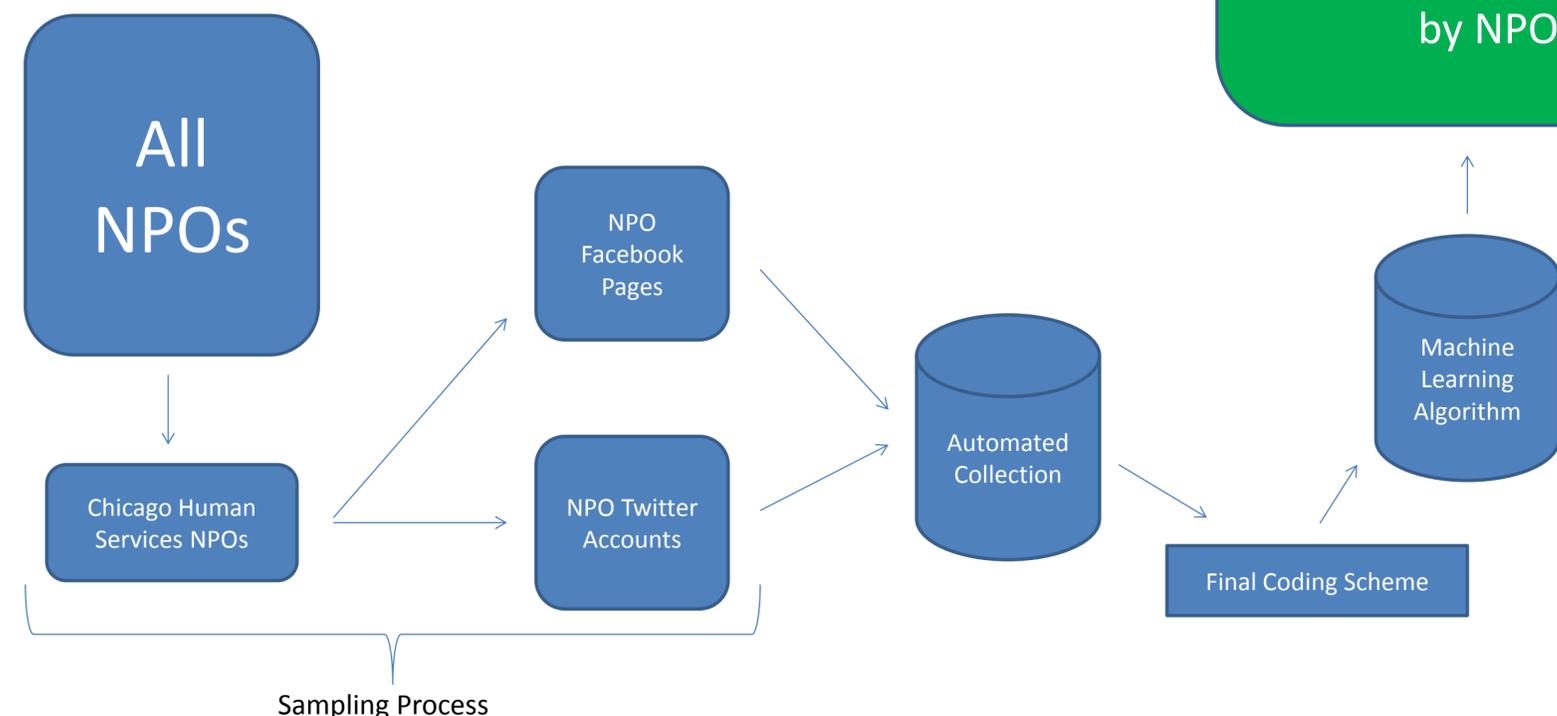
Approach / research dimension	Associated type of investigation	What this measures / provides	Contextual approach for this study
User-centered	qualitative	user perception	**survey instrument**
Data-centered	quantitative	observed reality	**SNS data**
Theory-centered	behavioral theory/case study	predictive construct	**activity theory**

Methods

User-centered

Pilot Interviews → Revise Coding Scheme → Survey Instrument → Revise Coding Scheme → Participant Coding → Revise Coding Scheme

The Goal: A narrative that uses this data to describe the landscape of motivation for use of SNS by NPOs

Data-centered

All NPOs → Chicago Human Services NPOs → NPO Facebook Pages / NPO Twitter Accounts → Automated Collection → Final Coding Scheme → Machine Learning Algorithm

Sampling Process