What does organizational life look like today?

Consultant running meeting on Google Hangouts
Real estate agent checking listings
Journalist applying for job

EMBA student writing paper for class
Professor grading papers
Activist uploading files to Wikileaks

HOW SHOULD THE PERVERSIVE “MEDIATION” OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL LIFE AFFECT ORGANIZATION STUDIES?
“When I was your age…”

Where did the data come from?

- Compustat tape
- Moody’s Industrial Manual (hand-coded)
- Current Population Survey (Jan. '83; calculated by industry)
- Corporate Data Exchange directory (1981; hand-coded)
- Spectrum 13F ownership directory (1980; hand-coded)
- Standard & Poor’s Directory (1982; hand-coded, cleaned, compiled into network measures)

Time to completion: 4 years (1988-92)

Fast forward: social science today is “roughly where astronomy was when the telescope was invented or where biology was when the microscope was invented” (Robert Shiller)

E.g., how has the correlation between different measures of size changed since 1950?
Correlation between market cap and three other size measures, 1950-2000

The roots of the Tunisian revolution

December 17: Mohamed Bouazizi, a college graduate unable to find work, was forced to sell fruits and vegetables bought on credit in an illegal street stall to support his extended family. Faida Hamdy, a middle-aged policewoman, seized his fruits and vegetables and, when he protested, slapped him across the face in view of the public.

Robbed of his dignity and no longer able to provide for his family under a corrupt regime, Bouazizi appeared in front of the governor's office, doused himself with paint thinner, and lit a match. He died in the hospital on January 4.
Nine days later…

Tunisian president swept from power

By Rould Khatif in London and Heba Saleh in Tunis

Published: January 15, 2011 11:40 | Last updated: January 14, 2011 22:12

A month-long wave of violent protests has swept Tunisia's president from power, bringing an extraordinary end to the 23-year rule of one of the Arab world's most autocratic leaders.

Tunisians were astounded by the speed of developments after the televised announcement by Mohammed Ghannouchi, prime minister, that he had taken over from Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, the 74-year-old president, who has fled the country and was reported on Friday night by Saudi-owned Al Arabiya television to have arrived in the Saudi city of Jeddah. The report was confirmed by the official Saudi Press Agency.

Mr Ghannouchi promised political and economic reforms and invited opposition representatives for talks on Saturday on forming a government. It was unclear how far the country would move towards a more democratic system after the chaotic transition; nor was it clear if the Tunisian army played a role in Friday's events, as a state of emergency was declared earlier in the day and troops surrounded the airport.

Tunisia: In days, social media ended 54 years of dictatorship

By Mort Rosenblum

Published on GlobalPost (http://www.globalpost.com)

Home » Africa » Tunisia: In days, social media ended 54 years of dictatorship

Facebook and Twitter helped shift the power of fear from its leader to its people.

Ben Ali tried toPEC, but he faced a durable dictator's worst nightmare: the balance of fear had shifted. A mob torched his beach palace. He fled in panic.

As U.S. headlines focused on the tragedy in Tucson, a world-changing drama played out an ocean away in Tunisia. In a few days, social media ended 54 years of dictatorship.


Ben Ali tried to temporize, but he faced a durable dictator's worst nightmare: the balance of fear had shifted. A mob torched his beach palace. He fled in panic.

No hard-liner in the Arab world, or anywhere else, could miss the implications. Tunisia was hardly Iraq, if it fell so easily to insurgents, all despots were endangered.
Protesters in Egypt Defy Ban as Government Cracks Down

By KAREEM FAHM and LIAM STACK

CAIRO — The Egyptian government intensified efforts to crush a fresh wave of protests on Wednesday, banning public gatherings and detaining hundreds of people and sending police officers to scatter protesters who defied the ban and demanded an end to the government of President Hosni Mubarak.

The skirmishes started early in the afternoon, and soon, small fires illuminated large clothes under an evening. Riot police officers using batons, tear gas and rubber-coated bullets cleared busy avenues; other officers set upon fleeing protesters, beating them with bamboo staves.

Egypt has an extensive and widely feared security apparatus, and it deployed its might in an effort to crush the protests. But it was not clear whether the security forces were succeeding in intimidating protesters or rather inciting them to further defiance.

In contrast to the thousands who marched through Cairo and other cities on Tuesday, the groups of protesters were relatively small. Armored troop carriers rumbled throughout Cairo's downtown on Wednesday to the thud of tear-gas guns. There were signs that the crackdown was being carefully calibrated, with security forces using their cudgels and sometimes throwing rocks, rather than opening fire.

But again and again, despite the efforts of the police, the protesters in Cairo regrouped and at one point even forced security officers, sitting in the safety of two troop carriers, to retreat.

Anger and a Facebook Page That Gave It Voice

By JENNIFER PRESTON

If there is a face to the revolt that has sprouted in Egypt, it may be the face of Kh Ald Said.

Mr. Said, a 35-year-old Egyptian businessman, was pulled from an Internet cafe in Alexandria last June by two plainclothes police officers, who witnesses say then beat him to death in the lobby of a residential building. Human rights advocates said he was killed because he had evidenced of police corruption.

The Egyptian police and security services have a well-earned reputation for brutality and snuffing out political opposition. But in Mr. Said, they unwittingly chose the wrong target.

Within five days of his death, an anonymous human rights activist created a Facebook page — We Are All Khald Said — that posted celluloid photos from the morgue of his battered and blooding face, and YouTube videos played up contrasting pictures of him happy an smiling with the graphic images from the morgue. By mid-June, 130,000 people joined the page to get and share updates about the case.

It became and remains the biggest dissident Facebook page in Egypt, as even protests continue to sweep the country, with more than 473,000 users, and it has helped spread the word about the demonstrations in Egypt, which were ignited after a revolt in neighboring Tunisia toppled the government there.

"There were many catalysts of the uprising," said Ahmed Zidan, an online political activist marching toward Tahir Square for a protest last week. "The first was the brutal murder of Khald Said."
Protest like an Egyptian?

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

POLITICS | FEBRUARY 17, 2011

Wisconsin Public Workers Protest Governor’s Proposal

By KRIS MAHER and DOUGLAS BELKIN

For a second straight day, thousands of Wisconsin public employees converged on the state capitol in Madison to protest Gov. Scott Walker’s plan to close the state’s projected $3.6 billion budget shortfall by increasing the cost of their pensions and health benefits and taking away their collective bargaining rights.

About 10,000 teachers, nurses, city workers and firefighters chanted “Kill the Bill” and held signs outside that said “Recall Walker,” while others squeezed shoulder-to-shoulder inside the capitol rotunda as a key legislative panel held hearings on the bill.

Mr. Walker said Wednesday afternoon he would listen to lawmakers’ concerns but didn’t plan “to fundamentally undermine the principle of the bill, which is to allow not only the state but local governments to balance their budgets.”

In exchange for bearing more costs and losing bargaining leverage, the state’s 170,000 public employees were promised no furloughs or layoffs. Mr. Walker has threatened to order layoffs of up to 6,000 state workers if the measure fails.

President Barack Obama called Mr. Walker’s bill an “assault on unions.” He made the remark in the course of an interview with a Milwaukee radio station about federal budget issues.

A Tunisian-Egyptian Link That Shook Arab History

CAIRO — As protesters in Tahrir Square faced off against pro-government forces, they drew a lesson from their counterparts in Tunisia: “Advice to the youth of Egypt: Put vinegar or onions under your scarf for tear gas.”

They fused their secular expertise in social networking with a discipline gained from religious movements and combined the energy of street fans with the sophistication of surgeons. Evolving from older leaders of the Arab political opposition, they relied on tactics of nonviolent resistance channeled from an American scholar through a Serbian youth brigade — but also on marketing tactics borrowed from Silicon Valley.

As their swelling protests shook the Egyptian state, they were locked in a virtual tug of war with a leader with a very different vision — Gamal Mubarak, the son of President Hosni Mubarak, a wealthy investment banker and ruling-party power broker.

Considered the heir apparent to his father until the youth revolt eliminated any thought of dynastic succession, the younger Mubarak pushed his father to hold on to power even after his top generals and the prime minister were urging an exit, according to American officials who tracked Hosni Mubarak’s final days.

The defiant tone of the president’s speech on Thursday, the officials said, was largely his son’s work.

The exchange on Facebook was part of a remarkable two-year collaboration that has given birth to a new force in the Arab world — a pan-Arab youth movement dedicated to spreading democracy in a region without it. Young Egyptian and Tunisian activists brainstormed on the use of technology to scale surveillance, communicated by text and traded tactical tips on how to stand up to rubber bullets and organically barricaded.

The Wall Street Journal
Does racism influence voting?

**Campaign Stops**

JUNE 3, 2008

How Racial Are We? Ask Google

By Cassandra Smith-Keene

Barack Obama won 34.6 percent of the popular vote in 2008 and 39.5 percent of the electoral vote, 95 percent of which he received in states with a majority of African Americans. The current popularity of Barack Obama has brought attention to the role of race in American politics.

**Racially Charged Web Searches and Voting**

In 2008, Barack Obama performed much better than expected by people with the largest frequency of racially charged Google searches. The analysis looked at Web searches in two United States markets.

For example, in the middle of the year, Barack Obama significantly won the 12 percent of states with highest frequency of racially charged Google searches.

Obama's victory is explained by the greater frequency of racially charged Google searches in an area, the higher the president received compared with what was predicted.

Obama received about 7 percent fewer votes than expected in the 4 percent markets with the most racially charged searches.
Surprising sources of network data

January 26, 2011 12:06 PM PST

Senator proposes mobile-privacy legislation

by Micah J. Morss

Federal laws need to be updated to halt the common police practice of tracking the whereabouts of Americans’ mobile devices without a search warrant, a Democratic senator said today.

Ron Wyden, an Oregon Democrat, said it was time for Congress to put an end to this privacy-intensive practice, which the Obama Justice Department has sought to defend in court.

In an impassioned speech at the libertarian Cato Institute in Washington, D.C., Wyden said his staff was drafting legislation to restore “the balance necessary to protect individual rights” by requiring police to obtain a search warrant signed by a judge before obtaining location information.

Even though police are tapping into the locations of mobile phones thousands of times a year, the legal groundwork remains hazy, and courts have been divided on the constitutionality and legality of the controversial practice. In September, the first federal appeals court to rule on the legality indicated that no search warrant was needed, but sent the case back to a district judge for further proceedings.

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Apple, Google Collect User Data

By JULIA ANGIN and JENNIFER VALENTINO-DEVRIES

Apple Inc.’s iPhones and Google Inc.’s Android smartphones regularly transmit their locations back to those companies, based on data analyzed by The Wall Street Journal.

W/L.com Senior Technology Editor Julia Angin in reports Apple’s iPhone and Google’s Android regularly transmit user location data back to those companies, based on data analyzed by The Wall Street Journal.

Apple Inc.’s iPhones and Google Inc.’s Android smartphones regularly transmit their locations back to those companies, according to data and documents analyzed by The Wall Street Journal—intensifying concerns over privacy and the widening trade in personal data.

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Computers, Too, Can Give Away Location

By AMR EFRATI and JENNIFER VALENTINO-DEVRIES

Google Inc. and Apple Inc. collect and store location information from personal computers, as well as mobile devices, according to company executives, a disclosure that sheds new light on the scope of the data collected by tech companies.

Apple gathers information from some Apple Macintosh computers connected to Wi-Fi networks, and Google collects data from Wi-Fi-connected computers that use Google’s Chrome browser or search “ toolbar.”

Keeping Track

How Apple, Google use location data

They obtain the information after a computer scans the area around itself for available Wi-Fi networks, typically after users give a websites permission to determine the computer’s approximate location.

A description of the methods came in an interview with a Google product manager and a letter from Apple executives to lawmakers. Some of the information is laid out in Google’s privacy policy.

In most cases, the companies ask users for permission before gathering information about users’ wireless networks and nearby networks. But sometimes when they ask, it isn’t clear exactly how the data will be stored and used. Some Apple computers send location information to Apple if a user asks the computer to use its location to automatically display the correct local time.

Both companies have said the data they collect are anonymous and aren’t tied to specific users.

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The Really Smart Phone
Researchers are harvesting a wealth of intimate detail from our cell phone data, uncovering the hidden patterns of our social lives, travels, risk of disease—even our political leanings.

By Robert Lee Holtz

Apple and Google may be interesting privacy catchers by tracking where and when people use their mobile phones...but that’s just the tip of the iceberg. Consumer surveillance is taking shape within the cellphones of a weather-stripped apartment complex in Cambridge, Mass.

For almost two years, Alex Prabhakar at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has tracked families living in campus housing via sensors and software installed on their smartphones—recording their movements, relationships, meals, health, cell phone use, and spending. In this wealth of intimate detail, he is finding patterns of human behavior that could reveal how millions of people interact at home, work, and play.

Through these and other cellphone research projects, scientists are able to identify “influencers,” the people most likely to make others change their minds. The data can predict major events where people are likely to be at a given time in the future. Cellphone companies are already using these techniques to peddle ads based on a customer’s social circles of friends—which people are most likely to desire.

The Technology Helping Repressive Regimes Spy

As protesters in the Middle East use social media to organize and communicate, the regimes they’re battling are using sophisticated technology to intercept their emails, text messages and cellphone calls.

On Wednesday’s Fresh Air, journalist Ben Elgin talks about a Bloomberg News series, “Wired for Repression,” which details how Western companies are selling surveillance technology to regimes including Iran, Syria, Bahrain and Tunisia.

Those regimes have then used the information obtained from those technologies to torture protesters and dissidents, Elgin tells Fresh Air contributor Dave Davies.

“One Iranian engineer became caught up in the protest movements after the election of 2009 and he was arrested. He was beaten and put into prison and interrogated 14 times over 50 days,” Elgin says. “During these interrogations, not only was he presented with [his] text message transcripts, he was presented with a very sophisticated diagram of who he had called, and then who those people had called. And he was interrogated on every connection within his network of contacts.”

The engineer had worked for Ericsson AB, where he had helped install the systems that would later be used in his interrogations.

“The damage that can be done was suddenly very clear to him,” Elgin says. “And that led him to want him to talk [to me]. He has since fled [Iran], which has made it easier for him.”

Electronic ties that bind

Technology can help uncover dangerous cliques in companies.

It is one of the more unusual cases that Elizabeth Chaiman has worked on. Several years ago, Ms Chaiman’s software company, Cataphora, based in California, analyzed the contents of e-mails sent by employees at a firm that had been sued by America’s government for supposedly insubstantial charges on federal contracts. Cataphora’s analysis helped to prove that the allegation was groundless. But it also revealed that some executives at the company shared an interest in bonds, buying their e-mails to one another with references to their pecuniary but keeping me in mind of it in correspondence with other staff.

In this instance, the result was simply deep embarrassment. But other companies have ended up in serious trouble because of hidden networks. “In internal corporate investigations you often find informal cliques that communicate in ways designed to execute a fraud or to cover it up,” says Robert Cherry, a partner at KPM, a law firm. The recession increases the risk that such groups of rogue employees will be tempted to engage in wrongdoing to protect their jobs.

That is why firms such as Cataphora and RedenData that specialize in e-discovery—the practice of mining electronic records to unearth important data and relationships—are seeing healthy demand for their services. Cataphora’s software lets firms analyze everything from e-mails to electronic calendars and thus build a picture of typical patterns of communication across their operations. It then flags exceptions to these patterns, such as individuals who send many messages to one another even though they are not in the same unit and have little reason to interact.

The software can dig deeper still by analyzing linguistic patterns. In one case, Cataphora spotted a link between several executives at a firm that had been issuing bogus invoices to inflate its revenues. A program flagged the executives, who were all in on the scam, had been using the same unusual sign-off phrase in their e-mails, which turned out to be associated with a college fraternity to which they all belonged.
NEW WAYS TO COLLABORATE WITH STRANGERS AROUND THE WORLD

Open data and collective data collection

"951 cities in 82 countries" has become the standard definition of the scale of the Occupy protests... With your help, adding events in our form below, we've been able to show 750 Occupy events worldwide."

http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2011/oct/17/occupy-protests-world-list-map
Occupy Movement in the US, 2011.9~12

Out of 954 CBSAs, 207 had at least one reported protest (data collection still ongoing)

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Example: Merging Google Trends data with other sources

Prior online interest in activism: Google activity for searching four keywords (protest; inequality; social movement; activism) during 2006.9~2011.8.

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Legend

Out of 954 CBSAs, 207 had at least one reported protest
Loosely overlaps with election results (Obama vs. McCain; maps.webfoot.com)
A Venus flytrap for data about inequality around the world?

Challenges and questions

- **Challenges:**
  - Ignorance: what does “API” stand for?
  - Gluttony: a 10-year-old at the all-you-can-eat buffet?
  - Sloth: the discipline of theory when “peeking” is just so easy…

- **Questions:**
  - How could you use big data?
  - What would you want to learn in a Big Data Summer Camp?
  - Is this pure evil?