

## PROTOCOOPERATIVE SOCIAL NETWORKS

### *Redes Sociais Protooperativas*

Tatiana de Carvalho DUARTE  
*Mestre em Comunicação Midiática e Pesquisadora Bolsista da FAPESP -*  
[tatixx13@gmail.com](mailto:tatixx13@gmail.com)

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#### RESUMEN

Este trabajo hace uso de la interdisciplinariedad con la biología, para construir un concepto que explica la configuración actual de la Web 2.0, su expansión y el crecimiento. Para ilustrar el proceso he utilizado la analogía con las relaciones ecológicas que se pueden establecer sobre la base de las interacciones entre las especies neutras, positivas o negativas. Este trabajo hace referencia al hecho que las redes sociales están invirtiendo una cantidad muy baja en la publicidad, en proporción a sus ingresos y el uso de inversiones en tecnologías para atraer a los productores de contenidos y anuncios publicitarios posibles. Al mismo tiempo, los generadores de contenidos y las empresas están utilizando este espacio para la auto-promoción a través de hipervínculos, imágenes, texto, recursos de audio y video, en una interacción positiva para ambos. El enfoque en la relación de esta investigación se ejemplifica través del interacción entre la red social Facebook Inc. y una selección de blogs y sitios que crean y administran el contenido que conforma la red. Por lo tanto, este artículo tiene como objetivo describir cómo esta relación puede ser nombrado como Protooperational y se considera beneficiosa tanto para los generadores de contenidos y las empresas que compran espacios publicitarios y de difusión de la propia red social. Este artículo pretende analizar cómo conviven ambos emprendimientos sin relación entre ellos, aunque en menor escala, y demostrar en qué medida esto será una simbiosis mutua.

**Palabras clave:** Protooperación; Redes Sociales; Simbiosis; Sitios; Facebook.

#### ABSTRACT

This work makes use of interdisciplinarity with biology, to build a concept that explains the current configuration of Web 2.0, its expansion and growth. To illustrate the process, I used the analogy with the ecological relationships that can be established based on interactions between neutral, positive or negative species.

This work make reference to the fact that social networks are investing a very low quantity in advertising, in proportion to their revenue, and using investments in technologies to attract content producers and potential advertisements. Concomitantly, content generators and companies are using this space for self-promotion through hyperlinks, images, text, audio and video resources, in a positive interaction for both.

The relationship focus of this research will be exemplified through the interaction between the social network Facebook Inc. and through a selection of blogs and sites that create and manage the content that makes up the network. Thus, this article aims to describe how this relationship can be named as Protooperative and be considered beneficial both to the content generators and companies that buy advertising space, and for the dissemination of the social network itself. This article also aims to analyze how both ventures coexist without the relationship between them, even if on a smaller scale and to demonstrate in what extent this will be a mutual symbiosis.

**Key words:** Protooperation; Social Networks; Symbiosis; Sites; Facebook.

## 1. Introduction

The principle of relativism proposes that a fact should not be categorically defined as the interpretation of their validity is given due time, context, space, social group, etc. So I use this doctrine to assert that with the changing technology and communication, the usual ways of analyzing the relationship of the public with many different media should be reviewed, as well as the ways in which the media themselves relate to each other.

The world has again become "infinite" for us: to the extent that we can not reject the possibility that he have infinite interpretations. Again the great fear affects us - but who would want to immediately deify again, the old way, this monstrous world unknown? And start to worship the unknown as "the unknown human being "? Ah, are included too many not divine interpretation possibilities of this unknown, too much devilry, stupidity, foolishness of interpretation - our own, human, too human, that we well known... (Nietzsche, 1882, p.278)

This new "Infinite" takes us to the possibility of revise traditional panoramas and set new standards. Based on this principle I base myself in other areas of knowledge to build the concept that we want to use to explain the new configuration of web 2.0<sup>1</sup> in it expansion and growth.

Making use of the interdisciplinary established with biology, the concept that this paper seeks to explain is analogous, in turn, to the ecological relationships that can be established from interactions between neutral, positive or negative species. (0, + and -).

According to Eugene P. Odum and Gary W. Barrett (2008, p.283), the possible combinations are 00, --, + +, +0, -0, and +-. However we must pay attention, to the combinations ++, -- and +- that spliteds, lead us to nine interactions and relationships. They are: neutralism, competition (by direct interference), Competition (for resource usage), Amensalismo, Commensalism, Parasitism, Predation, Protocooperation and Mutualism.

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<sup>1</sup> Change in the online environment renewing the way users relate to the media and how the media are positioned in relation to the public.

The ecological relationship considered in this work is the protooperation. A relationship that results in positive effects (+ +) as well as not cause addiction among populations of species (--).

Roger Dajoz (2005, p. 129) explains that this relationship "appears when two species form an association which is not indispensable, because each one can live in isolation." Likewise Odum and Barrett (2008, p. 305) infer that is a relationship in which "both organisms gain by association or interaction of some kind."

The analogy that this work suggests makes reference to the fact that social networks are investing very low in advertising, in proportion to their revenue, and using investments in Technologies, differentials for their platform, to attract content producers and potential advertisements. At the same time, content generators and companies are using this space to promote themselves through hyperlinks, images, text, audio and video resources in a positive interaction (+ +) for both.

The relationship focus of this research will be exemplified through the interaction between the social network Facebook, *Inc.* and a selection of blogs and sites that create and manage the content that makes up the network. Thus, this article aims to describe how this relationship can be named as protooperative and be considered beneficial both to the content generators and companies that buy advertising spaces, and for the dissemination of the social network itself. And analyse, therefore, how both ventures coexist without the relationship existent between them, even if on a smaller scale, and to what extent this will be a mutual symbiosis.

## **2. Methodology**

For this analysis, a survey was conducted across multiple posts in a period of one month of publication, more specifically the month of June 2012.

Initially it was done a analysis of the literature on the subject, related topics and subsequently has begun the collecting the posts. These were tabulated in order to highlight the posts that contained texts created by the users, which ones contained only images or videos, or were based on shares.

Between the posts shared by users, we define which ones came from timelines of users and which had its basis in communities, forums and social networks external site.

Among the posts created with the user's own texts, analyzed whether these came from regular user profiles or business pages.

On top of these data and analyzes we define the basic standards that characterize the relationship between protooperational company websites, networks and users.

### **3. Sociability and heterogeneity of society**

Initially we considered globalization as a process of homogenization where everyone would be subjected to the same social, cultural and informational aspects.

In this scenario, Canclini (2006, p.11) warns us of a change of thought when, despite the apparent easeness of access and interaction, "the multiculturalism is a subject inseparable of the globalizing movements." Therefore the subjects remain individualized and at the mercy of their own context and influences, keeping the world in its fractionated reality, even if differently articulated.

Which means it is no possible to think and act leaving aside the globalizing processes, or, in other words, the hegemonic tendencies of urbanization and industrialization of culture. Some interpret this as the triumph of "single thought" and the end of ideological diversity. For my part, I prefer this as a comprehensive horizon, but open, relatively indeterminate. To exit this option is necessary to examine the specific conditions in which, in time, develop cultural practices in different countries, the interaction of global projects with the way multiculturalism profiling social relations in each region. (Canclini, 2006, p.11)

This thought goes according to what Pierre Lévy (2002, p.163) shows that this thinking collectives is not an amorphous mass of "free will, reason and attention".

More than consumers, citizens currently are configured as agents able to dictate terms of influence and impose their culture on concepts already lined.

These views and guidelines often arise from the relationship between the citizens itself and between the different cultures in a globalized world. So, currently, applies the Freudian concept that our feelings, ideas, opinions and motivations can be, very often, manifestations of our unconscious and, in turn, subject to interference from other aspects of society that are not only in the globalized level.

We live in a panorama where there is a heterogeneous mass that respects the individuality, even in a broad and generalized perspective. And that, makes individuals able to opine, generate and manage content, criticize and analyze references that are postulated to them.

With the TIC's<sup>2</sup> advent such as social networks, new behaviors can, however, be noted in the interactions and communications. The case analyzed in this paper considers social networks as an object and thus deals with the relationships built in this environment.

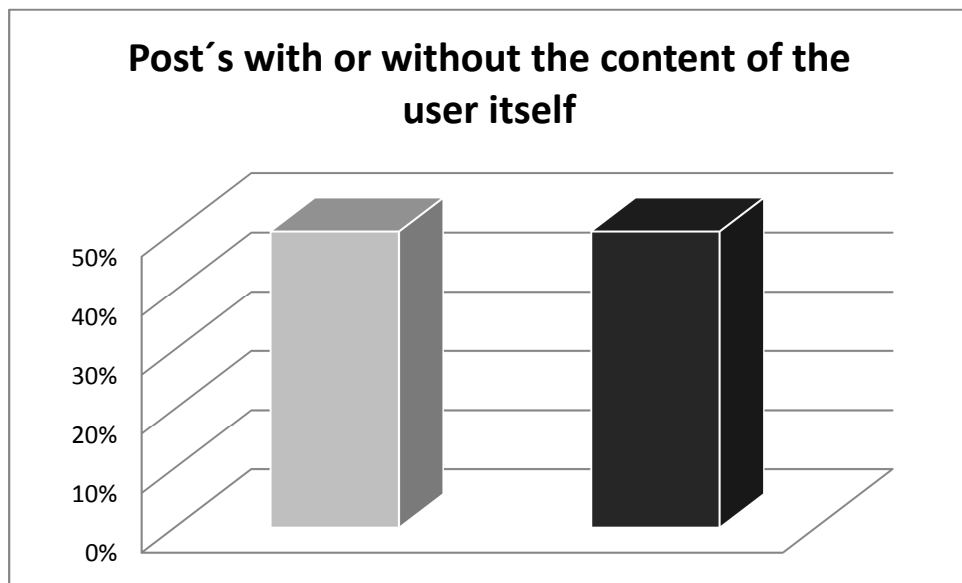
A noted change in behavior demonstrates that the social environment enables users that, as individuals are able to critic and share your opinion with other users. For that we have the buttons “like”, that allows the user to demonstrate their compliance with the subject; “share”, to disclose the contents of their interest, and “comment”, that enables the user to disagree with the manifest content.

Initially studies showed that social networks were used more as a diary, announcing the life of each person, rather than as an environment for interaction and dissemination of content. But the graph below shows that this reality tends to change once, exactly half of the users in the sample analyzed, when shared contents of other users, just disseminate content without exposing its written opinion.

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<sup>2</sup> Information and Communications Technologies.

Graph 1. Data from research sampling made by the researcher



Legend: Grey: with content; Black: without content

It's important to note, however, that in most cases the act of sharing among your network of friends, means that the user agree with the position of the post and would like to publish it on your timeline.

This interaction between users, even without the explicit position of each one, and based only on the buttons "like", "share" and "comment", already demonstrates that networks serve to develop social ties that promote the approach of cultures, opinions and statements of several areas, without losing the heterogeneity carater of the masses.

#### **4. Ecological relationships and the protooperation.**

Just as in human beings, the animals interact and try to maintain their survival. In such cases, according to Raquel Recuero (2010) situations of cooperation, competition and conflict may be noted.

While cooperation is essential for the creation and maintenance of the structure, the conflict contributes to the imbalance. The competition, on the other hand, can act to strengthen the social structure, generating cooperation to achieve a common objective, to provide collective goods more quickly, or even generate conflict, wear and break in relations. (RECUERO, 2010, p.83)

This concept is similar to the biology's studies when we have that:

The competition is manifested in two circumstances: (a) when individuals, of the same species or different species, try to look for and explore the same resource, which is present in limited quantities, (b) or, if such resources do not exist in quantity limited, when competing organisms hurt themselves. (DAJOZ, 2005, p. 113)

The competition between human beings is explained, according Dajoz (2005, p. 113), by the lack of resources for species that share the same type of means for survival. As men fight for food, water, money and power. I include money and power among the basic conditions of survival, since the capitalist world is managed according to economic principles and survival depends on the detention of purchasing power.

By understanding the definition of power, we note that, more important than the power itself, are the relations in which power is arrested and / or won and the objective to which power is destined, for example, to exert political pressure, institutional, or even in the exercise of power in its multiple complex or simple meanings and purposes. In these cases the means by law, influence or control achieve the necessary purpose so that each individual can arrest the power.

And this truth is validated as a consequence of the relationship between species and their fight for survival and, according to principles of natural selection, only the strongest survive and is able to adapt to new situations.

Thinking about companies, websites and blogs, the ability of adaptability will be studied as the resource for pages and social networking profiles looking for new ways to interact with those belonging to your network.

In the case of proto-cooperation, there is the union between species where each one is able to get benefits from the relationship in order to ensure their survival. In this case there is also the definition of power relations, but at the moment both species are granted so there is no reason to interpolate one over the other in a relationship of mutual benefit.

Thus, at first, social networks are in evidence, so it is possible to use their tools to promote and disseminate itself. And, in the other hand, the networks used

generate content that is shared by the users to keep itself in operation, characterizing thereby the relationship with no struggles and as a mutually beneficial between the parts involved.

To explain, therefore, according to the terms of biology, the concept of protooperation when around social media, we invoke that platforms, such as social media, make self-promotion for their sites and blogs, in their own social networks, benefiting itself from the use of content created by institutional users to move the timelines of network profiles.

### **5. The potential of social networks as platforms for dissemination**

With the diversification of media, the choice on the best way to publicize a product has become even more complex. Through social networks, for example, people united in common interest groups that have demanded products and offers increasingly personalized. Soon, the old advertisements, aimed at a homogeneous mass, encountered a diverse population, demanding and aware of the opportunities and rights they have.

The proliferation of advertising means (media) and distribution channels is making it difficult to marketing practice the 'one size fits all'. Some claim that mass marketing has its days numbered. Not surprisingly, many companies are turning to micromarketing at one of four levels: segment, niche, local and individual. (Kotler, 2000, p.278)

Kotler (2000, p. 278) talk about the possibility of the end of mass marketing, a new possibility is the highlight of this text. By offering on their websites, blogs and pages, buttons sharing on social networks, companies are faced with a new platform for the dissemination of their products that is often free and wide-ranging.

Since a long time ago the advertising potential of sharing between users is noticed by new media. Facebook, the largest social network in the world,



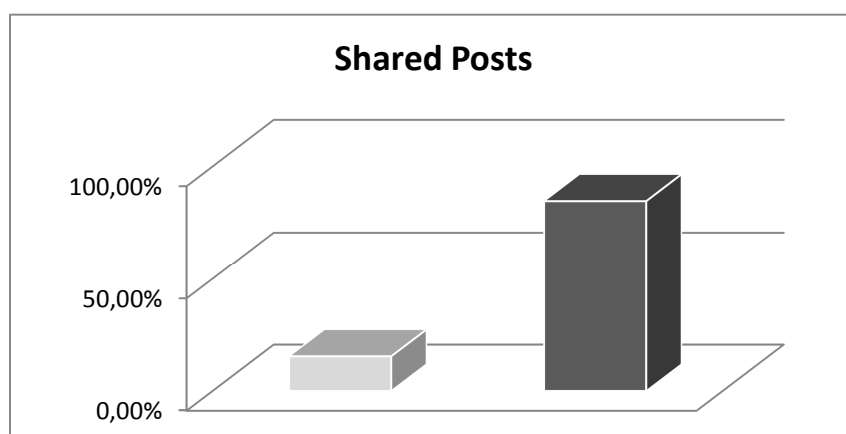
according to the Alexa Web Information Company (2012)<sup>3</sup>, began their existence following guidelines aimed at sharing.

In a post on the Facebook blog, managed by employees and containing their vision and not an institutional identity, the social network's founder, Mark Zuckerberg, has stated his intention to improve the sharing and interaction between people. He also states that his greatest difficulty was to realize that people seemed to have an initial fear of sharing because of the idea of losing their privacy.

At this point you may notice a reversal of the Agenda-Setting theory. When we are able to observe that social networks do not function as determiners of what should be guided. There isn't the social networks that determine the issues to the public in this new context, but the public concerned that chooses the topic of their interest and share what they believe deserves to be highlighted, passed over, ignored or obfuscated information among many.

This explains how some of that fear of invasion of privacy seems to have vanished since the 100% posts analyzed in this paper, about 84% departed from personal profiles, even sharing issues created by other pages or profiles.

Graph 2 - Data from research sampling conducted by the researcher itself.



Legend: Grey – of user profiles; Black – from pages or communities or sites.

<sup>3</sup> Information from the Alexa's site. Date June, 2012. (<http://www.alexa.com/topsites>).

So listening to their users and based on this need to control the information, Zuckerberg worked on your network and secured a fine line between the individual control, the privacy and the interaction between users and their personal data.

I founded Facebook on the Idea that people want to share and connect with people in their lives, but to do this everyone needs complete control over who they share with at all times. This idea has been the core of Facebook since day one. When I built the first version of Facebook, almost nobody I knew wanted a public page on the internet. That seemed scary. But as long as they could make their page private, they felt safe sharing with their friends online. Control was key. With Facebook, for the first time, people had the tools they needed to do this. That's how Facebook became the world's biggest community online. We made it easy for people to feel comfortable sharing things about their real lives. We've added many new tools since then: sharing photos, creating groups, commenting on and liking your friends' posts and recently even listening to music or watching videos together. With each new tool, we've added new privacy controls to ensure that you continue to have complete control over who sees everything you share. Because of these tools and controls, most people share many more things today that they did a few years ago.

Overall, I think we have a good history of providing transparency and control over who can see your information. (Mark Zuckerberg, 2013).<sup>4</sup>

With that thought Mark Zuckerberg (2011) ensured an exponential expansion of his social network without using mostly direct advertising. From its goal of improving a platform for sharing online he analyzed what was necessary for its users to adhere to the idea and worked to remedy this demand alongside the promotion of his network by the users.

While this social network, that loses in the number of daily visits only to the Google Site, according to statistics from Alexa site<sup>5</sup>, thinking of ways to improve

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<sup>4</sup> Information from the Facebook's Blog. Date outubro, 2013.  
(<https://blog.facebook.com/blog.php?post=10150378701937131>)

<sup>5</sup> Information from the Alexa's Site. Date June, 2012.  
(<http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/facebook.com#>)

the forms of interaction provided by your product, the supporters of the network spread it throughout the world.

In winning the boundaries of privacy that people wanted, the response to Facebook was the mass membership. Therefore, analyzing clients he obtained the key to the success of their business and assured spontaneous sharing without total direct advertising.

Currently the social network, which has been the subject of a Hollywood movie, has over 3000 employees in its 31 offices around the world, translation of its platform in 70 different languages, a count of approximately 845 million monthly active users<sup>6</sup> in which among 80% of these are from outside the United States and Canada and 425 million users on its mobile platform.

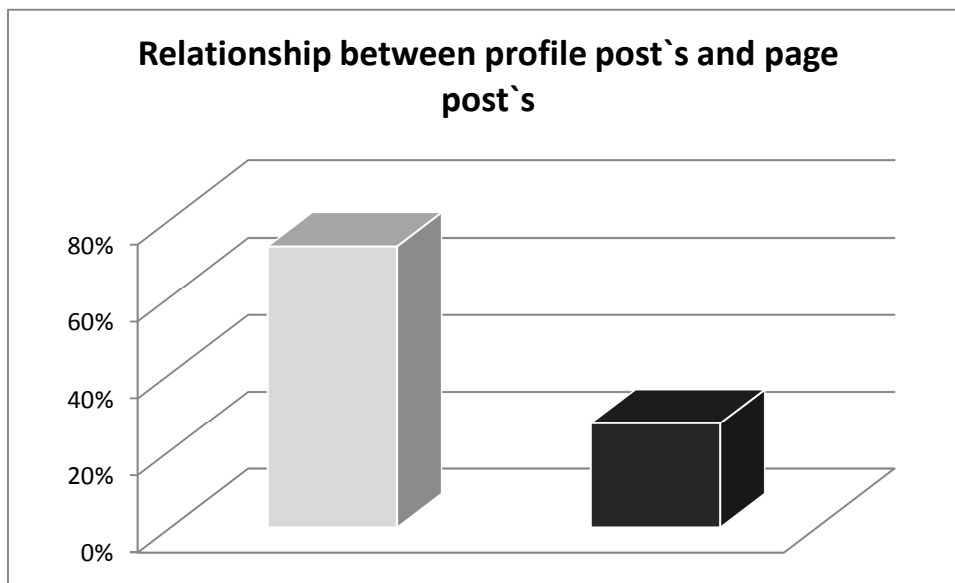
The interesting thing to observe is that there was targeting of funds for investments in sharing and interaction of the masses, and so the goal has been reached on the network. Therefore, other companies may also follow this example and invest in opinion and in the point of view of their customers. This way they will facilitate the process of purchasing products and not just invest in processes that induce consumption.

Increases every day the business participation in the environment of social networks as a way to get closer to their target audience and receive feedback that can not only improve sales and customer loyalty as well as attract new target groups.

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<sup>6</sup> Information from the Facebook's Social Network. Date. December, 2011. (<http://newsroom.fb.com/content/default.aspx?NewsAreaId=22>)

Graph 3. Data from research sampling conducted by the researcher itself.



Legend: Grey – profile post`s; Black – from pages or companies.

## 6. Protocooperational evolution of the media

Note the appropriation of social networks for the commercial sphere, is nothing more than accepting the evolution of media for areas other than those restricted to entertainment and social environment.

The access to publicity in social networks is facilitated both by the simple interface of content production and sharing, as the diversity of media channels available to do so.

In this scenario, check selfpromotion companies in social networks is a fact increasingly common. However, it is important to verify that the establishment of a company in social media without prior planning, can be a double-edged sword, strengthening the institutional image or placing at the mercy of crises that can get to the point of interrupting the process of consumption and affirmation of the identity of a brand.

A unidirectional one-way communication, symbolizes times when sending a message (advertising or informational) was determined solely by the encoded message by the issuing and the decoding by the receiver. Today this scenario flees the inertia of some theories and evolves following new paradigms of structural linguistics and semiotics.

It is considered therefore that the context, the life experiences and culture of those involved in the transmission of messages have as much importance in the production of meaning as a simple consideration of transmitters and receivers as agents of communication.

Acceptance of the context as a direct influence in the message leads the discussion on the appropriate media to be published each message once its connotation depends so obviously from the context. This consideration also applies to advertising reports and dissemination on the social networks that, because of its messages containing precise texts and cause of its high speed access, can easily be misinterpreted if the actions were unplanned and the chosen media was not the right one.

The Facebook, however, entered in the 2.0 environment and in the collaborative manner when allowed any blog or microblog to obtain rights to use its social plugins, regardless of the shared content (except the content for over 18 years and subject to censorship).

Enjoy and share buttons are available in various media and spontaneously generate content or journalistic guidelines that move the social network. This spontaneous content management feeds the network in real time maintaining routine update every second and with an exorbitant amount of information.

To think that to ensure visibility Facebook used millionaire marketing strategies is a mistake. This paper aims to show that to be the most accessed social network in the world, was enough host it through plugins in others environments and receive content produced by them and for them.

As there were advantages to other sites and blogs since, having your content available in the largest social network in the world with about 845 million users recorded in 2011, is not a detrimental factor. The advantage of offering to its readers social plugins, is to ensure a spontaneous disclosure, free and often viral.

Thus is explained the concept of the relationship between users, websites, blogs and social networks as Protooperatives, since it is remarkable the mutual benefit between the elements of the relationship. Relationship that benefits both and their co-existence and simultaneously does not interfere with

independent survival in case some of the need to disassociate themselves from the other.

## 7. Conclusion

The emergence of cyberspace promotes the question of what are the best media for each company? What is the proper language? Until to which point your target audience is able to absorb new technologies, APP's, MEME's, use hashtags, RSS feed and thus decode the message of your business the way you want? These and other questions to be answered and tabulated lead to conclusions about the level of maturity and evolution of their audience, making the company plausible candidate or not to use these new media resources.

So the social networks opted to promote itself online in other medias, allowing other medias to do that to. We know, therefore, that the relationship between social networks and other online media set up with a positive Protocooperative interdependence.

This term, appropriate of biology and also known as facultative mutualism, feature all ecological relationships where both species, even though different, are benefited and can live independently of each other in a harmonious relationship.

Relations of this kind may be seen between different species, known therefore as interspecific or heterotypic, or even between identical species, in the case considered as intraspecific or homotypic.

Treating the relationship between Facebook and blogs, in our analogy, is talking about interspecies relationships, as commented in this case the association between social networks and blogs. Even when we relate the network Facebook with Twitter microblog, we speak of this type of relationship between different species.

In this sense, the term Protocooperation Social Network is being coined in order to explain the dependency relationship between social networks, especially network facebook, and other social media such as blogs, microblogs, bookmarks and content aggregators. And therefore demonstrate evidence of

interspecific harmonic relations, without ignoring the fact that homotypic or intraspecific relationships are also a phenomenon existent.

## 8. Thanks

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